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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Phase 4 sees 62.84% turnout in 96 seats

Polls are marred by violence in WB & Andhra; Jammu records highest turnout in decades

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

A voter turnout of 62.84 was recorded on Monday in the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha elections covering 96 constituencies spread over 10 states and Union Territories. There were scattered incidents of violence reported in West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh.

West Bengal again recorded an impressive turnout at 76.29 per cent, the highest among states/UTs in this phase.

Srinagar constituency in Jammu and Kashmir witnessed 37.53 per cent voting in the first Lok Sabha election in the Valley since the scrapping of Article 370, with the EC stating that it was the "highest turnout in decades".

The overall voter turnout in the first three phases of the Lok Sabha elections was 66.14 per cent, 66.71 per cent and 65.68 per cent, respectively.

Also, Assembly elections have been completed in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Andhra Pradesh, apart from 28 assembly seats of Odisha.

In Andhra Pradesh, the TDP and YSRCP accused each other of indulging in violence, especially in Palnadu, Kadapa and Annamayya districts.

YSRCP alleged that TDP leaders captured five polling booths in the Vemuru.

At Dalavaipalli village in Railway Kodur constituency, an EVM was destroyed while cars belonging to the ruling party and TDP were damaged, a police official said. A TDP agent was attacked at Nakkaladinne village in Myduruku constituency, leading to his hospitalisation.

YSRCP alleged that party agent Suresh Reddy was stabbed at Mandi Krishnapuram village in Chittoor's Gudipala mandal. It also alleged that TDP supporters attacked party member B Anji Reddy at Aravallipadu in the Darsi constituency.

TDP MLC Mohammed Ahmed Shariff wrote to Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Kumar Meena, complaining about alleged attacks by YSRCP cadres on TDP supporters at Rentala village in Rentichintala mandal of Palnadu district.

Meanwhile, TDP supremo Chandrababu Naidu alleged that there was "no peaceful atmosphere in the state for people to exercise their franchise".

EVM glitches were also reported in several places in Odisha. An official said 65 Ballot Units, 83 Control Units and 110 VVPATs have been replaced so far and most of the replacements were done during the mock poll exercise before starting of real voting at 7 am. —*PTI*

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People wait in queues to cast their votes at a polling station, in West Bengal's Bardhaman, on Monday ***PHOTO: PTI***

EC rescues 3 kidnapped TDP polling agents in Andhra

Amaravati, 13 May

Andhra Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Mukesh Kumar Meena on Monday said three TDP polling agents who were allegedly kidnapped in Chittoor district have been traced and secured. According to a press release from CEO's office, TDP agents were kidnapped from Bokaramanda village in Chittoor district's Sadum mandal, which falls under the Punganuru Assembly constituency.

BJP's Madhavi checks IDs of Muslims at booth, booked

HYDERABAD, 13 MAY

BJP candidate for Hyderabad Lok Sabha seat K Madhavi Latha was on Monday booked by election authorities after a video clip in which she was purportedly asking burqa-clad women Muslim voters to show their faces to compare with the photo identity cards surfaced.

In the video, Latha was seen asking the women voters at a polling booth to lift the burqa and show their face so that she could verify the identity.

"A case is registered in Malakpet police station against Madhavi Latha, contesting candidate, BJP, under Sections 171C, 186, 505(1)(c) of IPC and Section 132 of the Representation of the People Act," the Hyderabad Collector said in a post on X.

She was also seen telling the policemen to allow voters into polling booths only after a thorough check.

Polling for the total 17 Lok Sabha seats was underway in Telangana.

Section 171C deals with interference or attempts to interfere with the free exercise of any electoral right.

Section 186 is related to voluntarily any public servant in the discharge of public function, while 505 is applied for inciting or likely to incite, any class or community of persons to commit any offence against any other class or community. —*PTI*

BJP candidate Madhavi Latha checks identity of voters at a polling station in Hyderabad, on Monday ***PHOTO: PTI***

OUR DAY, OUR RIGHT

VOTER TURNOUT

West Bengal	76.29%
Madhya Pradesh	70.45%
Andhra Pradesh	68.20%
Jharkhand	64.44%
Odisha	64.23%
Telangana	61.81%
Uttar Pradesh	58.02%
Bihar	56.23%
Maharashtra	53.24%
Jammu Kashmir	37.53%

**appx turnout till 9.30pm*
Source: ECI

Debt-burdened farmer ends life in Vijayapura

VIJAYAPURA, 13 MAY

Burdened by heavy loan, a farmer woman, Rukmavva Dundappa, 60, committed suicide by jumping into a well in Arjunagi village of Babaleshwar taluk, Vijayapura district, on Monday. She had a total financial liabilities of Rs 10 lakh. Her borrowings included Rs 1 lakh from Gadya Primary Agricultural Cooperative Bank, Rs 2.5 lakh from Vijayapura HDFC Bank, Rs 50,000 from Chaitanya Finance of Babaleshwar, and a substantial private loan amounting to Rs 6 lakh. Police officials from Babaleshwar station swiftly responded to the incident. —*Salar News*

Journalist shot dead in UP's Jaunpur

JAUNPUR, 13 MAY

A 43-year-old journalist was shot dead in the Shahganj area of this Uttar Pradesh district on Monday, police said. Ashutosh Srivastava of Sabarhad village was on his way to Imranganj market around 9.30am when unidentified assailants shot him at the intersection near Jaunpur-Shahganj Road, Circle Officer (Shahganj) Ajit Singh Chauhan said. Family sources said Srivastava had written to officers at the Shahganj police station a month ago and requested protection but the cops did not pay heed to his request. Following the murder, locals held a protest by blocking the road. The protest was lifted following assurances by officials that the matter will be looked into. —*PTI*

Mumbai rains: 3 killed in billboard collapse

MUMBAI, 13 MAY

Flight operations at Mumbai airport were suspended for an hour on Monday and local trains were delayed amid unseasonal rains, accompanied by a dust storm. A 100-foot tall illegal billboard fell on a petrol pump at Junction in Ghatkopar area, killing at least three people and injuring 59 others, even as a search and rescue operation is going on. An under-construction metal parking tower collapsed on a road amid gusty wind in Wadala area, injuring three persons and damaging vehicles. "As many as 100 people are feared trapped under the hoarding. 62 people have been pulled out so far, of which three are dead, while 59 others are injured. —*PTI*

3 minors found dead in sewage treatment plant

The victims are Anushka Dahinde, Vijay Dahinde and Mihir Janagouli

VIJAYAPURA, 13 MAY

Three children were found dead in a sewage treatment plant on Indi Road on the outskirts of Vijayapura on Monday.

The three children who drowned are Anushka Dahinde, 9, her sibling Vijay Dahinde, 7, and Mihir Janagouli, 7. Anushka and Vijay hailed from Gadag district and were visiting relatives in Vijayapura, while Mihir was a resident of Vijayapura city.

The children stepped out from their residence at Chabuksawar Dargah on Ashram Road around 10 am on Sunday for a camel ride. After the ride, they went searching for the camel but failed to return home. Parents filed a complaint with APMC police station.

Authorities and residents launched extensive searches and reviewed CCTV footage in the area. On Monday afternoon, the children's bodies were found floating in the tanks of the sewage treatment plant.

Kids' family members and residents blamed Municipal Corporation for the deaths, saying proper barricades and fences around the plant could have prevented the tragedy.

Area corporator Sunanda Kumasi blamed the Municipal Corporation for not placing back the fences after the repair work at the plant and inactive security guards at the site. —*Salar News*

'SEXUAL HARASSMENT'

10 days after arrest, HD Revanna gets bail in kidnapping case

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

A Special Court for Elected Representatives on Monday granted bail to JD(S) MLA H D Revanna in kidnapping case.

The 66-year-old former minister was arrested by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in an alleged case of abduction of a woman, linked to the allegations of sexual abuse of women by his son and Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, on 4 May.

The case was registered following a complaint by the woman's son, who alleged that his mother was sexually abused by Revanna's son Prajwal. The woman was allegedly abducted to prevent her from testifying against Prajwal, police sources have said. While Revanna engaged senior counsel CV Nagesh for his bail plea, Special Public Prosecutor Jaina Kothari and Additional Public Prosecutor Ashok Naik argued on behalf of SIT. Nagesh claimed that there is a political conspiracy behind Revanna's arrest and the victim has recently said in a video that she has not been abducted by Revanna or his family. Kothari and Naik countered it by saying, SIT recorded statements both under CrPC sections 161 (examination of witnesses by police) and 164 (statements recorded by Magistrate) and the victim has given a statement against Revanna. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 2

HD Revanna ***PHOTO: PTI***

6 hospitals in Bengaluru receive hoax bomb threat

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

Six private hospitals received a bomb threat via email which turned out to be a hoax, police said on Monday. Police began an extensive search operation along with dog and bomb disposal teams in these City hospitals.

The email to the hospitals on Sunday claimed: "I have placed explosive devices in your building. They will explode in the following hours. This isn't a threat, you have a few hours to disarm the bomb or else the blood of the innocent people inside of the building will be on your hands." —*PTI*

KEJRI'S STAFF MISBEHAVED WITH ME: SWATI

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Swati Maliwal on Monday went to the Civil Lines police station and alleged that a member of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's personal staff misbehaved with her, police officials said. Police has not yet received a formal complaint. Maliwal also made PCR calls after the alleged verbal spat, officials said. The two calls were made at 10am, they said. A team from the Civil Lines police station reached the Chief Minister's residence after that. —*PTI*

SC junks plea to remove Kejri as CM, asks LG to decide

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Supreme Court ***PHOTO: PTI***

Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a plea seeking removal of Arvind Kejriwal as Delhi Chief Minister after his arrest in a money laundering case, holding that the petitioner had no legal right to seek his ouster.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta said resignation in such circumstances is a matter of propriety but there is no legal right to seek removal of Kejriwal as the chief minister following his arrest.

"What is the legal right? On propriety you may certainly have something to say, but there is no legal right. It's up to the LG (Lieutenant Governor) to take action if he wants to. We are not inclined to entertain this (petition)," the bench told petitioner Kant Bhati's counsel. The bench, while dismissing the appeal challenging 10 April order of Delhi High Court said, "When the matter (Kejriwal's petition against arrest) was being heard, we had posed the same question to them. Ultimately, it is a matter of propriety and there is no legal right." The court said once it had dealt with the issue and opined that it fell within the executive domain, there should not be any "repeat litigation" as it was not a "James Bond movie that will have sequels". Last week, the top court granted Kejriwal interim bail in the case, which stemmed from the alleged excise policy "scam", to enable him to campaign in the Lok Sabha elections but barred him from visiting his office or the Delhi secretariat, and signing official files unless absolutely necessary for obtaining the lieutenant governor's approval. Kejriwal was arrested by the ED on 21 March, hours after the high court refused to grant him protection from coercive action by the federal anti-money laundering agency. —*PTI*

>>>More on Page 4

LONG-TERM CONTRACT

India signs Chabahar port pact with Iran

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

India and Iran on Monday signed a long-term contract for the operation of the Shahid Beheshti Port terminal at Chabahar in Iran.

This is the first time India will take over the management of an overseas port that will also have a multiplier effect on trade among India, Iran and Afghanistan as efforts continue to directly tap the potential in Central Asia, bypassing neighbouring Pakistan.

The contract was signed by India Ports Global Ltd and Ports and Maritime Organisation of Iran in the presence Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, according to a series of posts on X by the Indian Embassy in Iran.

India Ports Global Chabahar Free Zone (IPGCFZ), a subsidiary of IPGL, facilitated the first consignment of exports from Afghanistan to India in 2019. Located in Sistan-Balochistan province on the energy-rich Iran's southern coast, the Chabahar port is being developed by India and Iran to boost connectivity and trade ties.

India has been pushing for the Chabahar port project to boost regional trade, especially for its connectivity to Afghanistan. India and Iran have projected the port as a key hub for the INSTC project.

The INSTC is a 7,200-km-long multi-mode transport project for moving freight among India, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe. —*PTI*

This is the first time India will take over the management of an overseas port ***PHOTO: X/@SARBANANDSONWAL***

SM Krishna still in hospital; in stable condition

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

Veteran politician and former Karnataka Chief Minister S M Krishna's health continues to remain stable, the hospital where he is undergoing treatment said on Monday. The hospital said on Saturday the 92-year-old former External Affairs Minister admitted in its ICU continues to be on adequate support, and that he is being treated by pulmonologist Dr Satyanarayana Mysore and the critical care team lead by Dr Sunil Karanth. Krishna was admitted to Manipal Hospital for a "minor ailment" on 29 April. He was reportedly admitted to another super-speciality hospital here on April 21, for treatment of an acute respiratory infection, and discharged a few days later. *—PTI*

37-year-old undertrial dies in Udupi jail

UDUPI, 13 MAY

A 37-year-old undertrial died in the Udupi jail, officials said. The deceased undertrial Anup Shetty's case was related to the murder of his business partner, Ajendra Shetty, in Kalavara village, Kundapur, in July 2021, they said. According to officials, Anup had initially gone into hiding after allegedly killing Ajendra, but Udupi police apprehended him in Goa a few days later. On Saturday, Anup was found unconscious in his jail cell and was immediately rushed to hospital. Doctors pronounced him dead upon arrival. The cause of death is suspected to be a cardiac arrest, said the doctors who attended on him. Ajendra, a financier, was killed inside his office in Kalavara, Kundapur taluk, on the night of 30 July. His business partner, Anup, allegedly hacked him to death for which he was arrested. *—PTI*

Lightening strike kills 1, injures two others in K'taka

MANGALURU, 13 MAY

A 56-year-old labourer died and two others sustained injuries after being struck by lightning in Ichalampady of Noojibaltila village in Dakshina Kannada, officials said on Monday. Shrikisun was part of a group of labourers involved in sand extraction from the river bed in Ichalampady, they said. According to the officials, when a thunderstorm hit the area on the evening of 11 May, work was halted, and the labourers sought shelter in sheds along the river bank. The hospital authorities who treated the labourers stated that Shrikisun died in the impact. The other two sustained burn injuries and were stated to be out of danger. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Woman dies after tree collapses due to rains

CHIKKAMAGALURU, 13 MAY

A woman died and three others suffered injuries after trees collapsed following heavy rain and wind in in NR Pura taluk's Kanur-Kattinamane village, Chikkamagaluru on Sunday. The victim is identified as Savita, 48, from Melinapete from Koppa taluk. The incident occurred when she was walking to her garden. A tree toppled over, fatally striking her.

Meanwhile, another tree collapsed on a passing car, causing extensive damage leaving the three passengers injured. The injured have been rushed to Balehonnur Govern-ment Hospital for treatment. Authorities from NR Pura police rushed to the spot immediately after the incident. With Savita's death, the toll rises to 3 due to rain in Chikkamagaluru in recent days. *—SALAR NEWS*

CM dismisses Shinde's talk of toppling K'taka govt

CM says none of the Congress MLAs are 'ready to be sold'

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

Dismissing his Maharashtra counterpart's reported statements regarding efforts to replicate the 'Maharashtra model' to topple Congress government in Karnataka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said Eknath Shinde was under an "illusion" and is "daydreaming", and claimed none of his MLAs "are ready to get sold."

In a counter, Deputy Chief Minister and state Congress President DK Shivakumar said after the Lok Sabha polls, Maharashtra government led by Shinde will lose its strength, and there are doubts about its survival.

Speaking at a campaign event in Maharashtra's Satara, Shinde is said to have told the gathering that during his recent visit to Karnataka there were talks about 'Operation Nath (Eknath)', referring to toppling of the MahaVikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra and replicating it in Karnataka after Lok Sabha polls.

Maha Vikas Aghadi coalition government fell in 2022 following a spilt in Shiv Sena, with MLAs led by Shinde breaking out and joining hands with BJP.

CM Siddaramaiah and Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde *PHOTO: PTI*

> **During my recent visit to Karnataka there were talks about 'Operation Nath (Eknath)', referring to toppling of the MahaVikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra and replicating it in Karnataka after Lok Sabha polls.**
>
> -Eknath Shinde, Maharashtra CM

Siddaramaiah further asserted that Congress-led INDI Alliance will win the Parliamentary polls and come to power, and in Karnataka the party will win at least 20 out of the total 28 Lok Sabha seats.

Leaders of the two Opposition parties have been hinting at a possible power tussle within Congress, amid persistent rumours about leadership change in the ruling party in the state after Lok Sabha polls or mid-way of the current Assembly's tenure.

Shivakumar has made no secret of his ambition to become Chief Minister, while Siddaramaiah had sought public support during the Lok Sabha polls so that Congress wins maximum number of seats in the State, which would strengthen his position. *—PTI*

'WILL SHOW BLACK FLAGS'

Cong asks PM to get Prajwal back from Germany

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

Congress on Monday demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi make all efforts to bring back Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, who fled the country after sexual abuse allegations surfaced against him.

Talking to reporters, Congress' women wing president Alka Lamba said the party will show black flags to Modi during his rally and roadshow in Mumbai on 15 and 17 May.

"The silence of PM and BJP leaders is like supporting the accused," Lamba said.

The Centre must make talk to Germany to get back Revanna, she said. After the sexual abuse allegations surfaced, Revanna fled to Germany. "We will show you (Modi) black flags and gherao you even if you arrest us," Lamba said, adding her party is making plans for the agitation during the PM's visit to Mumbai.

PHOTO: PTI

So far three FIRs have been registered in Hassan, Mysuru and Bengaluru against Prajwal, State has constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the case *—PTI*

RAIN WREAKS HAVOC

Pedestrians and commuters risk their limbs while walking on a sludgy road after heavy rains lashed Bengaluru *PHOTO: SALAR*

News channel, anchor booked for 'spreading hatred'

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

A case has been registered against a news channel and its anchor on charges of spreading communal hatred through a recently aired programme, police said on Monday.

In a complaint filed by Tanveer Ahmed on 11 May, it was alleged that in a programme broadcast at 8.30pm on 9 May, the anchor referred to a working paper of Economic Advisory Council to Prime Minister (EAC-PM) according to which the population of Hindus declined by 7.8 per cent between 1950 and 2015.

While displaying the population percentage, the channel showed an Indian flag against the backdrop of Hindu population percentage and Pakistan flag against the backdrop of Muslim population percentage. The same Pakistan flag is also subsequently used while referring to the percentage of Muslims in Pakistan as well, the complaint alleged.

PHOTO: X/SCREENGRAB

According to the complaint, the anchor stated that one of the reasons for increasing Muslim population in India is that there is no minimum age of marriage for Muslims and if a complaint is lodged against child marriage in the Social Welfare Department, they cannot take action due to Islamic personal law; due to this, they have early marriages and more children.

"This is blatantly false as the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act prohibits child marriage for all, irrespective of religion. Then, he (the anchor) states that not having children is against the religion of Islam. This is again meant to insult the Muslim community," Based on the complaint received, a case was registered against the news channel and its anchor under section 505 (2) (Statements creating or promoting enmity, hatred or ill will between classes) of the Indian Penal Code at High grounds police station. *—PTI*

Around 196 locations have experienced flooding in 5 days *PHOTO: PTI*

BBMP announces ₹30L per ward to tackle rain issues

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) Chief Commissioner Tushar Girinath announced Rs 30 lakh funds to each ward in Bengaluru with an additional fund of Rs 10 crore under the Brand Bangalore initiative to address the rain related issues.

Around 196 locations in the City have experienced flooding over the past four to five days, with water entering into houses in 10 places. Speaking to reporters on Monday Girinath said, " Some flood-prone areas have received permanent solutions and 74 areas still lack a permanent remedy, necessitating temporary relief measures. We are utilizing the funds from World Bank funded initiatives of Rs1,500 crore for flood control which was received on 10 May."

Around 171 large trees and 690 branches have fallen due to the rain with the majority already. Currently there are 39 teams actively working for the past three days. Information regarding affected areas is being disseminated through WhatsApp groups led by Assistant Executive Engineers (AEE) and BBMP officials.

Previously, the BBMP had installed water level sensors at 124 different locations across the City to effectively manage and respond to flooding incidents. These sensors are powered by solar energy. The technology is designed to notify the Karnataka State Natural Disaster Monitoring Centre (KSNDMC) control room about the water levels. Subsequently, KSNDMC will relay this information to the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) of the BBMP to send immediate help to the flood prone areas.

The sensors are installed in canals are color-coded in green, blue, red, and black. Green and blue signify that the water level is within safe limits, while red indicates that the water level in the drains has reached a dangerous level. The colour black signifies flooding. *—Salar News*

Metro Green line to open by July-end

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

The Bengaluru Metro Green Line from Nagasandra to Madavara 3.7 kilometre stretch to be back on track by the end of July. The project faced numerous delays and was initially slated to be done by August 2019.

Speaking Salar News, a BMRCL official said that the project was stalled by the pandemic and a dispute with Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprises (NICE).

When BMRCL approached to NICE for a 630 meter stretch of land which is owned by them at a rent of Rs 5.75 lakh per month, they were initially ignored. The dispute was eventually resolved with a payment of Rs. 67.65 lakh by the BMRCL. The project further faced delays in the month of March due to labour shortage as many had travelled to their home-towns.

Currently the tracks for the trains have been laid and painting works inside the stations, granite stone laying, and electrical and signalling system installations are still going on. "We have planned to finish all these works by June and after the trial runs and inspection by the Commissioner of Metro Rail Safety (CMRS), the line will be open to the public by the end of July." said a BMRCL official.

The extension of the line leads to Manjunath Nagar, Chikkabidarakallu, and Madavara and the total cost of the project reaches Rs. 298 crore. The BMRCL also has constructed 3 kilometres of new roads to provide better accessibility to Anchepalya village and its surrounding areas from the metro station.

The opening of this extension line will significantly benefit commuters traveling to the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre and residents of Madanayakanahalli, Makali villages, and Nelamangala, bringing them within a convenient 6 kilometres of City.

In addition to this extension, the yellow line for the metro is all set to be launched in December 2024. This 19 kilometre line will be connected from RV Road to Bommasandra through driverless trains. A total of 14 train sets, equipped with Communication-Based Train Control is scheduled to arrive from August 2024 onwards.

—Salar News

Donkeys wed to appease Rain God

DAVANGERE, 13 MAY

Frustrated with the lack of rain, Holesirigere villagers of conducted a donkey wedding and offered special prayers to appease the Rain God.

The village turned to the age-old tradition as the region is extremely drought-hit and grappling with water crisis.

Despite several parts of Harihar taluk receiving showers, Holesirigere village continues to suffer from the parched conditions.

Villagers perform the wedding rituals for two donkeys in Holesirigere *PHOTO: PTI*

Halesh Kanekal, a former member of the gram panchayat said that villagers adorned the donkeys with bridal decorations and even put garlands around their necks. The donkeys were then paraded through the village.

The ceremony took place in Sriyogi Narayana temple. *—Salar News*

BJP CANDIDATES FILE FOR MLC NOMINATION

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

Ahead of the Legislative Council polls, BJP candidates YA Narayanaswamy and A Deve Gowda filed their nominations in Shubhagare on Monday.

Narayanaswamy filed nominations for Karnataka South East Teachers' seat. Meanwhile, Deve Gowda is contesting for the Bengaluru Graduates' seat. BJP on Saturday announced its candidates for five out of the six seats, leaving one for its alliance partner JD(S). Other BJP nominees are Amarnath Patil (North East Graduates), Dhananjaya Sarji (South West Graduates), and EC Ningaraju (South Teachers).

On Sunday, Congress announced its candidates list for six seats and State Chief DK Shivakumar handed over the B-forms (a document signed by an authorised office-bearer of a political party) to the selected nominees at the party office on Monday.

The contenders from Congress are Marithibba Gowda for the South Teachers constituency, KK Manjunath for South-West Teachers, Ayanur Manjunath for South-West Graduates, Chandrashekhar Patil for North-East Graduates, Ramoji Gowda for Bengaluru Graduates, and DT Srinivas for South-East Teachers.

—Salar News

MOB ATTACKS ACTOR CHETAN CHANDRA

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

Kannada actor Chetan Chandra filed a complaint at the Kaggalipura police after encountering a terrifying ordeal on Sunday evening when he and his mother were attacked by a group of approximately 20 individuals in Kaggalipura.

According to Chetan, the situation unfolded after an allegedly intoxicated individual caused damage to his car. When Chetan confronted the person about the damage, the altercation escalated as a sizable group, including a woman, gathered and instigated the attack.

PHOTO: X/ @EnglishSalar

He said the incident took place when they were returning from a temple visit. The actor was visibly injured in the video, with blood stains. Chethan stated that despite police intervention and warnings, the assail inflicted damage to his car. *—Salar News*

SLIGHT FALL IN %

CBSE results out, girls outshine boys

BENGALURU, 13 MAY

Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) announced the results for the 12th board exams on Monday, revealing a slight decline in the passing percentage in Bengaluru. The City recorded a passing percentage of 96.95 per cent, a decrease from last year's 98.16 per cent. Consequently, Bengaluru slipped from 2nd to 4th place nationwide this year. In a bid to discourage unhealthy competition among students, CBSE board has opted to discontinue the announcement of the toppers' merit list.

Students celebrate after the announcement of class 12th board exam results by the Central Board of Secondary Education *PHOTO: PTI*

According to CBSE board's report, girls have once again outperformed boys in the State with a passing per cent of 91.52 compared to boys' 85.67 per cent. A total of 16.33 lakh students had registered for exams this year and 16.21 lakh appeared.

In class 10 board exam results, Bengaluru secured the fourth position in the state-wise rankings, boasting an impressive overall passing percentage of 99.26. The State witnessed an overall pass percentage of 93.6 per cent, with 2.09 lakh students passing out of 2.38 lakh who appeared for the exams. Notably, girls in the State achieved a remarkable pass rate of 94.75 per cent, surpassing boys by 2.04 per cent. *—Salar News*

ANDHRA PRADESH

YSRCP MLA slaps man while waiting to vote, faces retaliation

YSRCP MLA A Siva Kumar slapped a man waiting to cast his vote at a Tenali polling booth in Guntur district only to receive it back himself. He had hit the man who questioned him for jumping the queue. The man did not hold himself back and returned the favour. After the voter retaliated, the MLA's supporters rained punches until police and other voters stepped in to stop the assault. Meanwhile, BJP accused the ruling YSR Congress of unleashing "unprecedented violence" to target NDA workers and sought EC's intervention. The party wrote to the poll body even as voting was for the assembly and Lok Sabha was being held in the state. It claimed that police were acting as mute spectators and not ensuring free and fair elections.

JHARKHAND

Security forces thwart Maoist bid to block voter access to booths in Singhbhum

Security forces thwarted an attempt by Maoists to obstruct voter access to polling booths by felling a tree and blocking a road leading to remote Sonapi and Morangponga areas of West Singhbhum, officials said. Election Commission had dispatched polling parties via trains and helicopters in Maoist-hit Singhbhum region, many areas of which are set to witness polling for the first time. Polling to Singhbhum seat, one of the worst-hit Maoist zones in the country, saw 26.16 per cent voting till 11 am. Meanwhile, electors cast vote fearlessly for first time at former Maoist hotbed 'Budha Pahad' booth.

WEST BENGAL

Violence, EVM glitches overshadow polls in West Bengal; BJP's Dilip Ghosh heckled

Sporadic incidents of violence marred the polls in the eight parliamentary constituencies as TMC and BJP workers clashed in hit Birbhum and Bardhaman-Durgapur seats. The poll panel received 1,088 complaints from parties alleging EVM malfunctioning and agents being stopped from entering booths. Clashes broke out between supporters of TMC and BJP in Bardhaman-Durgapur seat, as BJP candidate Dilip Ghosh was on his way to a polling booth. TMC blocked his convoy and squatted in front of his vehicle. The Central Industrial Security Force said two of its personnel deployed for the security of a 'Y' category protectee, were injured in an attack at Bardhaman.

MAHARASHTRA

CCTVs turned off for 45 mins, NCP(SP) alleges wrongdoing at EVMs warehouse in Baramati

NCP (SP) alleged wrongdoing after CCTV cameras got turned off for 45 minutes between 10.30 am and 11.15 am at Food Corporation of India's godown, where EVMs from the Baramati are stored. The election authorities, however, clarified that a cable of the cameras had to be removed during some electrical work on the premises. Meanwhile, Former Air Force chief Air Chief Marshal Pradeep Vasant Naik on Monday expressed surprise over the name of his wife Madhubala having been deleted from the voters list. "While I and my son were able to vote, my 72-year-old wife's name was found deleted from the voters list. When we brought this to the attention of the official there, he said that there was nothing he could do to help," Naik said.

UTTAR PRADESH

Deprived of facilities, UP villagers boycott polls; SP Chief Akhilesh alleges rigging

Villagers of Shahjahanpur district boycotted polls to protest against the lack of roads and development. In Lakhimpur Kheri, voters turned up at polling booths despite rains. Meanwhile, in Kannauj, Samajwadi Party's (SP) Akhilesh Yadav accused BJP of rigging the polls. Yadav claimed there were complaints of voting being disrupted in polling booths. The SP Chief also met police personnel with whom BJP workers allegedly misbehaved and enquired about their well-being. In a post on X, the state unit of BJP alleged that in the Bidhuna Assembly segment of Kannauj Lok Sabha seat, SP goons were not allowing people to vote for BJP to cast their votes and were indulging in booth capturing along with the presiding officer and police.

ODISHA

2 polling officials face the heat for dereliction of duty in Odisha

Election Commission (EC) has suspended two polling officials in Odisha for dereliction of duty, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Nikunja Bihari Dhal said. One polling official from Narla Assembly constituency in Kalahandi district and another polling official in Ganjam district have been suspended for dereliction of duty, he said. As voter turnout was a little low in the Berhampur Lok Sabha constituency, the CEO appealed to the voters to come out in large numbers and exercise their franchise. Some technical glitches were reported in EVMs in some places during initial hours. However, the situation has stabilised, the CEO said.

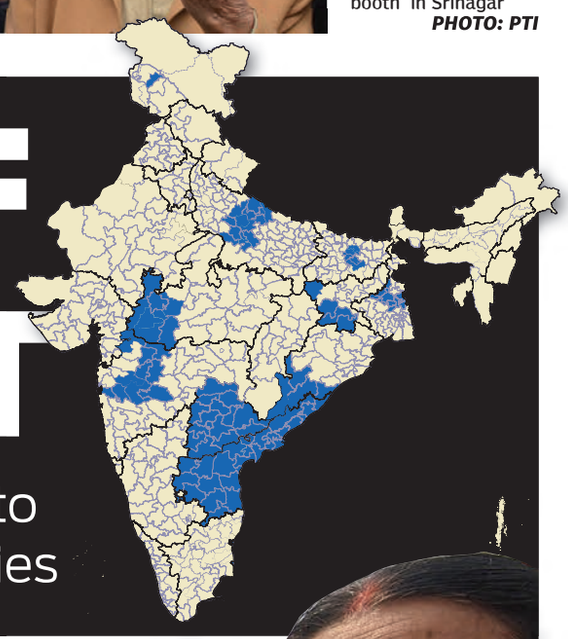
JAMMU & KASHMIR

Kashmiri Pandits face identity crisis as names go missing

Displaced Kashmiri Pandits in Jammu were unable to vote on Monday due to their names missing from the electoral rolls. Even as they lined up across special polling stations in Jammu amid tight security, several of them had to return without casting their vote. Assistant Electoral Returning Officer (AERO) Dr Riaz Ahmed attributed the problem to old data used to prepare the lists. As many as 52,100 Kashmiri migrants are registered as voters from Srinagar. Meanwhile, three generations of the Abdullah family cast their vote in Srinagar. National Conference President Farooq Abdullah, his son Omar Abdullah and his two grandsons cast their vote at Burn Hall School here.

National Conference President Farooq Abdullah, his son and party Vice President Omar Abdullah and grandsons Zamir Abdullah and Zahir Abdullah show their ink marked fingers after casting their votes at a polling booth in Srinagar
PHOTO: PTI

10 TALES OF THE BALLOT



As people in 10 states and UT beat the heat to vote, many booths saw violence & controversies

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MARKING THEIR RIGHT

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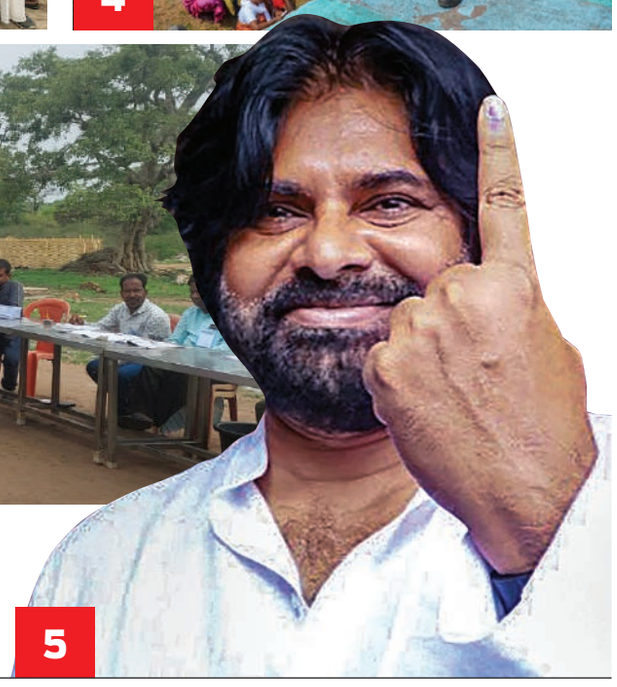

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1) Bihar voters show their inked fingers after casting votes for the fourth phase of Lok Sabha elections, in Ujiyarpur on Monday; 2) Polling booth in Odisha offers free drinks to beat the heat. The maximum temperature was 36°C; 3) Bahraich Tharu tribal women of Uttar Pradesh dressed up in traditional attire to vote in Sohni Balaigaon village; 4) A security personnel keeps vigil as people wait to cast their vote in Khunti district in Jharkhand; 5) Jana Sena Party President Pawan Kalyan shows his inked finger after casting vote in Mangalagiri Andhra Pradesh, 6) Chenchu Tribals vote in Nagarkurnool in Telangana
PHOTOS: PTI/ ANI/@ ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

BIHAR

JD(U) stopped people from voting: RJD

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) has filed a complaint against Janata Dal (United) with Chief Electoral Officer of Bihar regarding poll malpractice. A group of JD(U) workers stopped people from voting at some polling booths under Munger Lok Sabha constituency, RJD said in the written complaint. The JD(U) workers specifically targeted financially poor voters from backward communities at polling booths in Mokama, Lakhisarai and Barhiya, RJD alleged.

A cancer patient arrives on a stretcher to vote in Bihar
PHOTO: @ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA

MADHYA PRADESH

Rains play spoilsport in Madhya Pradesh

Rains disrupted polling in some areas of Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh. Meanwhile, Indore resident Gurdeep Kaur Vasu, 32, who is speech, hearing and visually-impaired, cast her vote. This is the second time she has voted. At least 70 visually impaired women in Mahesh Drihtiheen Kalyan Sangh in Indore turned up for voting. Also, a group of voters reached the polling station in a decorated bullock cart in the Nepanagar Assembly segment under the Khandwa Lok Sabha seat. A newlywed couple arrived at the Nepanagar booth in their wedding finery to cast their votes.

TELANGANA

Case against BJP MLA for creating ruckus

Mangalhat police in Hyderabad filed a case against BJP MLA Raja Singh for creating a ruckus at a polling booth during voting for phase four of Lok Sabha elections on Monday. Singh came to a polling booth at Mangalhat picked up a quarrel with a presiding officer over some trivial reasons and polling got disrupted briefly. Meanwhile, at Chimalamari of Palnadu district, a clash broke out between YCP and TDP factions resulting in stone pelting. Polling was stopped for some time and 10 injured were hospitalised.

Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and his family members show inked fingers after casting votes in Kodangal on Monday
PHOTO: PTI

Ex-judge Gangopadhyay moves Cal HC

KOLKATA, 13 MAY

Former Judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay, a BJP candidate from Tamluk Lok Sabha seat, on Monday moved Calcutta High Court alleging police overaction by registering an attempt to murder case against him. Justice Jay Sengupta, before whose court the matter was mentioned, directed that the petition will be taken up for hearing on Tuesday. Alleging malafide and overaction on the part of police, Gangopadhyay's lawyer Rajdeep Majumder submitted before the court that the FIR was lodged to prevent him from campaigning for the election. An alleged incident of protest against him by some persons claiming to belong to a teachers' organisation is stated to have taken place when Gangopadhyay went to file his nomination papers for the polls. *—PTI*

SC seeks ED's reply by 17 May on Soren's plea

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Supreme Court on Monday sought the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) response by 17 May on a plea of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha leader and former chief minister Hemant Soren, challenging his arrest in a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam. A bench of Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Dipankar Datta, which was initially listing the matter on 20 May, had to change the date to May 17 after senior advocate Kapil Sibal said polls would be over by then and he would be prejudiced if the long date is given in the matter. The bench said this week it is too much work and a lot of matters are listed. It expressed unwillingness to change the date but after Sibal and senior advocate Arunabh Chowdhury, appearing for Soren persisted with the request, the date was changed to 17 May. *—PTI*

INDIA scared of Pak's nuclear power: PM

Modi says Opposition parties are 'cowards'

MUZAFFARPUR / HAJIPUR, 13 MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday lashed out at the Opposition INDIA bloc, calling its leaders "cowards" who were "scared of Pakistan's nuclear power".

Addressing an election rally in Muzaffarpur Lok Sabha constituency of Bihar, Modi made an apparent reference to a recent statement of National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah, without mentioning him by name.

"INDIA bloc seems to have leaders who are scared of Pakistan and have nightmares of its nuclear power," he said.

The remarks come in the backdrop of comments by Abdullah about Pakistan having atom bombs and not wearing bangles.

"If Pakistan does not wear bangles, we will make the country wear these. I knew they did not have foodgrains. Now, I come to know they do not even have adequate supply of bangles," the PM said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi serves 'langar' during a visit to the Gurudwara Patna Sahib, in Patna, on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

Modi said unlike his opponents, who were concerned about promoting their offspring, "I have no 'waaris' (successor). The common people are my waaris".

He reiterated that Congress and RJD will "give away reservations" to Muslims "to pursue their vote bank. *—PTI*

Cong's schemes will help women: Sonia

She says schemes have fared well in K'taka

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Congress parliamentary party Chairperson Sonia Gandhi on Monday assured people that the "guarantees" listed by the party in its Lok Sabha poll manifesto will change their circumstances in this "difficult time".

In a video message, which was shared by Congress on social media, she said women of the country are facing tough times in the wake of a "severe crisis" and the party's 'Mahalakshmi scheme' for them will help change their lives.

"My dear sisters, women have made a huge contribution, from the freedom struggle to the creation of modern India. However, today our women are facing a crisis amid severe inflation. To do justice to their hard work and penance, Congress has come up with a revolutionary guarantee," Sonia Gandhi said.

"The Congress' 'Mahalakshmi' scheme guarantees that we will give Rs 1 lakh every year to a woman from a poor family," she said in her message, an appeal to people voting in the ongoing fourth round of the seven-phase general elections to support Congress.

Sonia Gandhi **PHOTO: PTI**

Sonia said Congress' "guarantees" have already changed the lives of crores of families in Karnataka and Telangana, where it has also implemented the scheme.

"Be it MGNREGA, Right to Information, Right to Education or through schemes like Food Security, the Congress party has empowered millions of Indians. The 'Mahalakshmi' is the latest guarantee to take our work forward," Sonia Gandhi said.

> **Congress' 'Mahalakshmi' scheme guarantees that we will give Rs 1 lakh every year to a woman from a poor family**
> -Sonia Gandhi, Congress parliamentary party Chairperson

"In this difficult time, I want to assure you that the hand of Congress is with you and this hand will change your circumstances. Thank you. Jai Hind," Sonia said, referring to her party's symbol.

Her appeal was shared by Congress Chief Mallikarjun Kharge, former party president Rahul Gandhi and party General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on their X handles. *—PTI*

Delhi HC dismisses plea against PM over alleged hate speech

New Delhi, 13 May

Delhi High Court on Monday dismissed a plea seeking a direction for immediate action against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other candidates contesting in the ongoing Lok Sabha elections over alleged hate speech in violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). The plea referred to a speech of Modi delivered on 21 April in Banswara, Rajasthan. Justice Sachin Datta, while dismissing the plea, observed, "I cannot micromanage Election Commission of India (ECI) as to how they deal with the situation. ECI is a constitutional body and it cannot be presumed that it will not do anything. This court finds no merit in the petition. Appearing for the petitioner, Advocate Nizam Pasha alleged that ECI has taken action against several leaders but not on any complaint filed against Modi. *—ANI*

Kejri says he will be back next day if INDIA comes to power

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday said he will be back from Tihar jail on 5 June if INDIA bloc comes to power after the election results are announced.

Arrested in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam, Kejriwal has been granted interim bail by Supreme Court till 1 June to campaign in the Lok Sabha elections. He will have to surrender and go back to jail on 2 June.

1 June is the last day of the seven-phase elections and the votes will be counted on 4 June.

Addressing his Aam Aadmi Party councillors, Kejriwal alleged that efforts were made to break and humiliate him during judicial custody in Tihar.

Arvind Kejriwal **PHOTO: PTI**

"There were two CCTV cameras inside my cell in Tihar and the feed was monitored by 13 officers. It was said that the CCTV feed was also provided to PMO. Modi ji was monitoring me... I do not know what grudge Modi has against me," he claimed.

Kejriwal said AAP leaders are respected and loved by people and "feared by the BJP because of our work".

"I have to go back to jail on 2 June. I will be watching the election results inside jail on 4 June. If the INDIA bloc comes to power, I will be back on 5 June," he told party councillors.On Sunday, he met party MLAs and praised them for not breaking down despite the BJP's efforts after his arrest. Kejriwal said AAP "became more united instead of breaking apart" after his arrest. *—PTI*

Kerala RMP leader booked over sexist remarks

KOZHIKODE, 13 MAY

Kerala police have booked Revolutionary Marxist Party leader KS Hariharan over his alleged sexist remarks against senior CPI(M) leader K K Shailaja and Malayalam film actress Manju Warrier, which he made during a recent public speech.

On Sunday, Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI), the youth outfit of the ruling CPI(M), also lodged a complaint with the DGP seeking action against the senior leader over his alleged objectionable comment.

Reacting to the case, Hariharan said he would deal with the case legally. *—PTI*

3 Naxalites killed in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli

GADCHIROLI, 13 MAY

Three Naxalites, including two females, were killed in an encounter with security forces in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district on Monday, police said. An intelligence input was received that some members of the Perimili Dalam of Naxalites were camping in a forest near Katrangatta village in Bhamragad taluka with an aim to carry out subversive activities during their ongoing Tactical Counter Offensive Campaign (TCOC) period, Superintendent of Police Neelotpal said. Two units of C-60 commandos, a specialised combat wing of the Gadchiroli police, were immediately sent for a search in the area, he said. After the firing stopped, bodies of a man and two woman Naxalites were recovered from the spot, he said. *—PTI*

Two girls die as temple balcony collapses in H'yana

AMBALA, 13 MAY

Two young girls died while another got injured when a portion of a balcony in a temple collapsed in Nanyola village here on Monday, police said. The deceased have been identified as Manisha Devi, 19, and Parminder Kaur, 18 , from Punjab's Tasalpur village, they said. According to the police, a lintel of the balcony on the first floor was put in the Devi Mandir complex here about two months ago. There is an institute nearby where many girls learn various courses. Among the girls who had come to the institute on Monday, three of them were standing in the shade under the balcony to protect themselves from the hot weather. Meanwhile, suddenly the balcony lintel fell and all three got buried under it. They were immediately taken to a nearby health centre here where doctors declared two dead. *—PTI*

India extends budgetary support to Maldives

MALE, 13 MAY

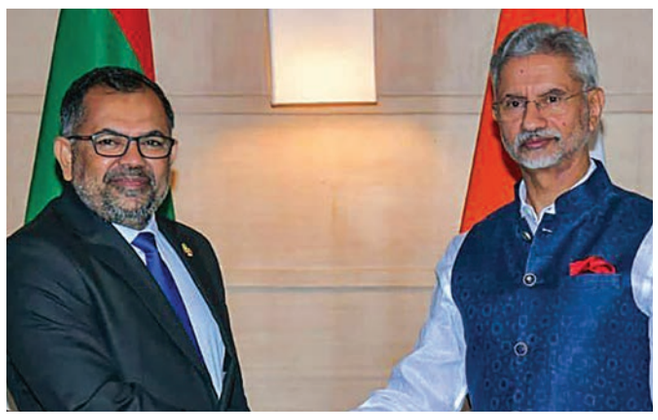
In a goodwill gesture, India has decided to extend vital budgetary support to the Maldives government with the rollover of a USD 50 million Treasury Bill for another year on the Maldivian government's special request, it was announced on Monday.

The State Bank of India has subscribed for one more year to the USD 50 million Government Treasury Bill, issued by the Ministry of Finance of Maldives, upon maturity of the previous subscription, the High Commission of India said in a brief statement on Monday.

India took this decision despite the bilateral ties experiencing turbulence since Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu, a pro-China leader, assumed office six months back.

These Government Treasury Bills are subscribed by SBI under government-to-government, a unique arrangement at zero cost (interest-free) to the Government of Maldives.

The continuation of subscription has been made at the special request of the Government of Maldives to secure budgetary support from the Government of India, the statement said.



Maldives Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar at a meeting, in New Delhi on Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

The Maldivian government on Monday thanked India for its support.

"Government of India's decision to rollover the T-Bill came following a request to that effect made by Foreign Minister Moosa Zameer to India's External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar, during the official bilateral visit to India from May 8-10, the statement said.

Zameer said that significant strides have been made in expediting India-assisted projects in the Maldives, as he underscored the government's commitment to prioritising the resumption and completion of these projects.It comes amid a downturn in the bilateral ties between the two countries since President Muizzu assumed office in November and immediately asked India to withdraw some 89 Indian military personnel from the country by 10 May. *—PTI*

NEVER RECEIVED ANYTHING WORTHY OF PROBE: EAM

MUMBAI, 13 MAY

India has never received anything which is specific and worthy of being pursued by its probe agencies, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday said over a fourth arrest made by Canada in the killing of Khalistan separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Jaishankar said New Delhi is open to an investigation if Ottawa has any evidence or information related to any violence which is relevant to be investigated in India.

"We have never received anything which is specific and worthy of being pursued by our investigative agencies and I am not aware that anything has changed in the last few days in that regard," the minister said in response to a question during a press conference here.

As a consular practice, it is informed to the government or the embassy of the country of origin when arrests of foreign nationals are made, Jaishankar said.

Nijjar, 45, was killed outside Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia on 18 June, 2023. *—PTI*

Assam: Anti-witch hunting crusader Padma Shri Birubala Rabha dies

GUWAHATI, 13 MAY

Padma Shri awardee Birubala Rabha, renowned for her fight against witch hunting, passed away at a hospital here on Monday after a long battle with cancer, doctors said.

Survived by two sons, a daughter, and other relatives, Rabha, 75, was admitted to the State Cancer Institute of Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) on 22 April due to severe weakness, GMCH superintendent Abhijit Sarma said.

"She has been a patient of advanced stage carcinoma oesophagus since 2021 and was undergoing treatment at our hospital. She was put on a metallic stent because of difficulty in swallowing six month ago," he added.

As Rabha's condition deteriorated, she was admitted to the hospital last month and was shifted to ICU on 4 May, followed by mechanical ventilator support on Sunday as she developed respiratory distress, Sarma said.

"After all possible intensive care, she breathed her last at 9:23 am due to multi-organ failure," he added.

Birubala Rabha **PHOTO: PTI**

Rabha, whose son and brother were victims of witch hunting, had fearlessly led her NGO 'Mission Birubala' amidst extreme hostility in remote areas. Despite facing numerous attempts on her life by superstitious villagers branding her a witch, she continued her courageous work.

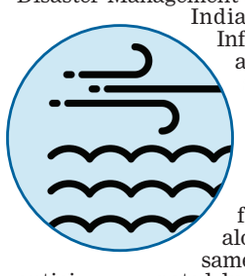
Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma expressed his deep condolences.

"I am deeply distressed to learn about the passing away of Padma Shri Smt Birubala Rabha. Through her untiring efforts to end social evils she illuminated the paths of scores of women with hope and confidence. *—PTI*

ROUGH SEA ALERT ISSUED FOR KERALA AND SOUTH TN COAST

T'PURAM, 13 MAY

A rough sea alert has been issued for the Kerala and south Tamil Nadu coast for Monday, according to the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority. The alert, sourced from the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), indicates a potential rough sea condition near the shore along the Kerala coast from 11.30 am to 11.30 pm on May 13, 2024. This condition is attributed to the effect of high period (15 - 18 sec) swell waves, with heights ranging from 0.5 to 1.2 metres. Similarly, there is a forecast for rough sea conditions nearshore along the Tamil Nadu coast during the same period on Monday. The rough sea is anticipated due to high period (15 - 17 sec) swell waves, with heights varying between 0.7 to 1.1 metres. The agency has urged fishermen and coastal residents to exercise vigilance and take necessary precautions in light of these rough sea conditions. *—PTI*



BETWEEN 2016 AND 2021

9,600 children jailed in adult prisons

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

More than 9,600 children were wrongly incarcerated in adult prisons across India between 1 January, 2016, and 31 December, 2021, a new study has found.

The data for the study -- "Incarceration of Children in Prisons in India" -- was obtained under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

The data indicates that at least 9,681 children were wrongly incarcerated in adult prisons between 1 January, 2016, and 31 December, 2021.

This figure was ascertained on the basis of responses to RTI requests by 285 district and central prisons out of a total of 570. "This also does not include the 749 other prisons from which we did not request data, including sub jails, women's prisons, open prisons, special prisons, borstal schools and other prisons. It also, as previously mentioned, only includes those who were successfully identified and transferred, not all those who were juveniles at the time of their alleged offence, including those identified by prison visitors, families or through self-identification," it said.

Uttar Pradesh reported that 2,914 children were transferred from prisons to juvenile homes **PHOTO: PTI**

Several states failed to adequately respond to enquiries, with notable non-compliance from Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Nagaland and the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Uttar Pradesh reported that 2,914 children were transferred from prisons to juvenile homes. *—PTI*

ISRAEL-GAZA WAR

Israelis attack trucks carrying humanitarian aid on the way to the Gaza Strip, unloading and wasting bags of wheat flour.
PHOTO: X/ @WARWATCHS

Are megacities forgetting rainwater endowment?

Even as Bengaluru reels from water crisis, other cities in the country have started hitting the headlines for the same reason. It is very clear that the prime reason for the water stress in Bengaluru is that the city did not value its rainwater endowment. Lakes were lost across the years and the city expanded and continued to extract the groundwater.

Lakes were lost across the years and city expanded, continued to extract groundwater ***PHOTO: ANI***

Bengaluru's efforts

The City of Bengaluru had mandated rainwater harvesting in residential colonies since 2010. In 2021, the Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) passed an amendment bill making it mandatory for buildings on the sites measuring 60x40 feet and more. Till date, 190,000 properties have installed a rainwater harvesting system says the website of BWSSB.

"We have also mandated rainwater harvesting for new properties which are 40 feet x 30 feet in size," Rajiv KN, chief engineer, BWSSB said.

Almost all the buildings — both residential and commercial with mentioned specification — have installed rainwater harvesting systems. Only some 10,000 properties are left out now, he added. BWSSB is penalising citizens for not harvesting rain.

People who have opted out either have insufficient space or land dispute, the engineer shared. "In the last 2-3 months, we received huge many requests for setting up rainwater harvesting — all this happened due to our awareness campaigns."

BWSSB claimed that it has kept no stone unturned for promoting rainwater harvesting across the city. Training programmes for different stakeholders, setting up of demonstration sites, awareness or 'Abhiyana' programmes have been regularly conducted, board officials said.

Over the last 150 days, we have not received any rain, according to Rajiv. This is why the impact of groundwater recharge is not visible, he added.

Communities are losing interest in rainwater harvesting due to lack of space in their households and high installation cost, said Vishwanath S, founder and director, Biome Environmental Solutions. More of community-level systems should be promoted instead of household-level systems, he suggested.

Few of the rapid actions of BWSSB in April very clearly showed that the the board realised they were falling short of harvesting rainwater in the city. At the end of April, BWSSB announced formation of a task force with the experts from IISc Bengaluru, Central Groundwater Board (CGWB) and Karnataka Groundwater Authority (KGWA), to monitor the groundwater across the city regularly with the help of artificial intelligence-driven groundwater monitoring system.

But what was the plan all about? A senior scientist, who did not want to be named, said, "Earlier, the monitoring network was managed by CGWB and Karnataka Water Authority (KGWA). But now, BWSSB is planning to have their own monitoring network, to which they have formed the groundwater task force."

The board will also instal automatic sensors in a large number of places to make this method successful, the source mentioned. "We will develop a ward-level database that will help us to make better decisions regarding groundwater recharge."

The new monitoring systems have been attached to 10-15 borewells as pilot projects, Rajiv noted.

BWSSB also rushed to announce that the extra rainwater from the tech parks and the community buildings will not go into drains but will be used to fill up nearby lakes. The board has planned to recharge 74 lakes, starting with 16 in May and June during the first phase, according to official sources.

Ramachandra explained that the idea of filling the lake is not new for Bengaluru. This is because, the engineer explained, rainwater from open spaces and parks automatically drains into lakes because of the city's undulating surfaces. Then, the new initiative is redundant, he said.

Only time will tell whether these recent endeavours by BWSSB will be benficial or only prove to be white elephants.

Pioneer Chennai slips

Chennai is another city that claims to be a leader in urban rainwater harvesting. Pradheeps Muthulingan, an environmental expert at Chennai Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA), stated: "In 2002, CDMA mandated the inclusion of rainwater harvesting system designs in building plans as a prerequisite for construction permits. This proactive measure has significantly contributed to sustainable water management in Chennai."

Despite seasonal declines in groundwater levels, particularly during summers resulting in water scarcity, the government's initiative has notably replenished water levels through the implementation of the RWH system, Muthulingan added. Later on, the Tamil Nadu Combined Development Building Rules of 2019, introduced RWH design guidelines.

Lakes, ponds and temple tanks are our traditional rain harvesting structures that also need to be rejuvenated using nature-based solutions, said Janakranjan, retired professor of Madras Institute of Development Studies, Chennai.

—Courtesy Downtoearth

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساڈھ

India shares revised National Forest Policy; focus on forest fire

India shared its revised National Forest Policy during the 19th United Nations Forum on Forests held in New York, United States from 6-10 May, 2024. The policy included a series of recommendations aimed at addressing forest fires.

At the forum, delegates began discussions on combating forest fires and developing a Model Forest Act. The event also focused on the UN's strategic plan for forests 2017-2030 and considered activities that support the thematic priorities for the biennium 2023-24.

The discussions centred around achieving the global forest goals, which encompass enhancing forest-based economic, social, and environmental benefits; significantly increasing the area of protected forests; mobilising financial resources; and promoting governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management. Additional focus was given to fostering cooperation, coordination, and synergies as cross-cutting goals.

Zhimin Wu, director of the forestry division at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), said, "India recommended adopting an integrated approach to forest fire prevention and management, along with post-fire landscape restoration through policy interventions. It shared its experience with technology adoption, including the use of remote sensing for near-real-time fire monitoring, online geoportals for forest fire reporting, and ecosystem-based approaches for post-fire restoration.

The nation also suggested creating universally accepted global standards for forest certification and highlighted the need to evaluate current certification programmes against universal standards.

India noted the growing role of communities in addressing forest fires and emphasised the rising scale and duration of such incidents in recent years, with significant impacts on biodiversity, ecosystem services, economies, livelihoods, and human well-being. The increased frequency and intensity of forest fires underscore the need for comprehensive long-term strategies for prevention and restoration.

The country also proposed operationalisation of the Global Fire Management Hub by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and FAO, which aims to create a platform for sharing knowledge and experience in mitigating forest fires.

During the debate, other countries shared their policy decisions and suggestions. Ukraine outlined its expanded Forest Code, detailing the impact on forests due to the Russian invasion. Costa Rica highlighted its ban on deforestation, forest cover protection, and payment for ecosystem services.

Indonesia presented its Forest and Other Land Use Net Sink 2030 strategy, and Malaysia committed to keeping at least 50 per cent of its territory under tree cover, with a plan to plant 7.9 million trees. Nepal reviewed its progress in community-managed forests, restored forests, protected areas, and tree planting policies.

Guatemala from Latin America reported a reduction in its annual deforestation rate to 0.36 per cent.

A draft declaration for the High-level Segment (HLS) was scheduled for 9 May, with the Forum set to conclude on 10 May.

—Courtesy Downtoearth

The discussion was around global forest goals ***PHOTO: UNSPLASH***

Additional focus was given to fostering cooperation, coordination, and synergies as cross-cutting goals ***PHOTO: UNSPLASH***

Menstrual cycle still a taboo subject at workplace, what can be done?

Have you ever felt sick at work? Perhaps you had food poisoning or the flu. Your belly hurt, or you felt tired, making it hard to concentrate and be productive.

How likely would you be to tell your boss you were unwell and had to go home?

While employees would probably tell their boss about a stomach upset, many who menstruate and feel unwell as a consequence every month, are unlikely to talk about their difficult periods.

Especially at work. This was confirmed in our recent study of 247 students and workers who have periods. We found only 6.7% would be honest with their employer about why they had to leave work or stay at home.

Additionally, 87% of those surveyed - 96% identified as women - felt their period often interfered with their work or study.

One respondent told us, "I would sometimes just say I wasn't well and needed to work from home to be near a bathroom. I would let people assume it was gastro." Another said, "I do not feel comfortable giving this as a reason to miss work as it feels like an excuse despite living in chronic pain."

The topic of menstruation is unquestionably still on the taboo list. And it is also clearly affecting the workplace.

The good news is we are starting to see initiatives aimed at making workplaces more inclusive for people who menstruate.

Earlier this month, Victorian government employees dealing with menstrual pain, menopausal symptoms and IVF treatments were given an extra five days sick leave as part of their Enterprise Bargaining Agreement negotiations.

But the Victorian Women's Trust led the way in Australia being the first company to introduce a Menstrual and Menopause Wellbeing Policy".

Other organisations including the Aintree Group, Fisher and Paykel Healthcare, the Cura Day Hospitals Group and sports business Core Climbing are also getting on board.

Many schools provide free pads and tampons which are also available at Melbourne council facilities, TAFE Queensland, and universities including Griffith and Monash.

The list of employers may grow if campaigns such as the Electrical Trades Union's 'Nowhere to Go' and The Retail and Fast Food Workers Union's 'We're Bloody Essential' are effective, as they are lobbying for more companies to consider the menstrual needs of their employees.

Having access to free period products seems to be paying off as our research found 84.6% of employees said it makes them feel their workplace cares about them and reduces the likelihood they will leave work due to their period.

Most women felt their period often interfered with their work or study ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

One respondent explained, "Periods can be hard. I once bled through my clothes at work and had to leave. It was so stressful and humiliating. Free period products could just change someone's day."

This is encouraging, but also suggests accessible products alone won't lift the taboo and support a menstrual-inclusive workplace. More needs to be done.

How to create a menstrual-inclusive workplace?

1) Recognise the impact of periods

Our study identified people who menstruate regularly experience physical symptoms such as abdominal pain (94%), backache (82%), and headaches (82%) before or during their period. They also describe emotional symptoms such as anxiety, fatigue, depression and irritability.

One respondent said: "My cramps are so painful they make me feel physically sick - as though I will throw up. So I don't like being out of the house because I can't stand up straight."

And another: "My period increases my general level of anxiety in class, at work, and in all other situations. It can cause me to be acutely anxious during my classes and work, and I struggle to concentrate."

To avoid feelings of humiliation, shame and discrimination, people with their period often mask and hide symptoms. By empathising with menstruators who are impacted in a wide variety of ways, organisations can support and empower them to look after their general and menstrual well-being.

2) Become an inclusive leader

Inclusive leaders treat menstrual health as a justice and human rights issue that is collectively important for individuals and the organisation. These leaders recognise people with their period should be supported, so they talk to them about cultural and practical ways the workplace can make them feel safe and allow them to manage their period with dignity.

This might mean providing free period products or offering menstruators flexible breaks and work hours when having their periods. Inclusive leaders recognise some people may need paid menstrual leave.

3) Normalise discussions about menstruation

Inclusive leaders go further than practical strategies, they create a period-positive environment by challenging stigma and discrimination. They normalise conversations about menstruation, and ensure people who menstruate feel heard, supported and respected. They offer education and training to dismantle the menstrual taboo in workplaces, and replace it with a culture that embraces menstrual wellbeing.

Ultimately, to make our workplaces equitable and inclusive, we must be willing to talk about menstruation openly and honestly and learn about the impact it has on employees. Only then will workers feel able to talk about what supports their health needs. *—The Conversation*

PHOTO: X/@WASHTIMES

Aus lifts ban on X over video of Sydney church stabbing

MELBOURNE, 13 MAY

An Australian judge Monday lifted a ban on the social media platform X showing Australians a video of a bishop being stabbed in a Sydney church. The temporary ban was put in place 22 April, but the judge rejected the application from Australia's eSafety Commission to extend the court order that would have expired Monday. Australian Federal Court Justice Geoffrey Kennett said he would publish his reasons for imposing and lifting the order later. The decision was a win for the company rebranded by billionaire Elon Musk when he bought Twitter last year. X was alone among social media platforms in refusing to remove video of Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel being stabbed. *—AP*

Taiwan detects 7 Chinese ships, 2 military aircrafts

TAIPEI, 13 MAY

The Taiwan Ministry of National Defence has said that it detected seven Chinese naval vessels and two military aircraft around Taiwan between 6 am on Sunday and 6 am on Monday. According to the Ministry of National Defence, the two People's Liberation Army (PLA) aircraft crossed the Taiwan Strait median line in the southwest sector of the nation's air defence identification zone. In response, Taiwan sent aircraft and naval ships and deployed coastal defence missile systems to monitor PLA activity. The increased activity in the Taiwan Strait region comes amid growing geopolitical tensions between Taiwan and China. Taiwan has long been a point of contention for Beijing, which considers the island a renegade province and has repeatedly expressed intentions to reunify it with the mainland. *—ANI*

Spain Socialists win Catalonia election

MADRID, 13 MAY

The Socialists of Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez have won Catalonia's regional election as pro-independence parties lost ground. The Catalan Socialist Party (PSC), under former Spanish health minister Salvador Illa, made substantial gains to emerge as the clear winner. With 99% of votes counted, it has secured 42 seats. Support for independence has dropped to 42%, from 49% in 2017, says the Catalan government's statistics institute. In the campaign ahead of this election, the issue of Catalonia's relationship with the rest of Spain was pushed into the background by other challenges, such as the region's drought and housing crisis. *—BBC*

Rwanda denies involvement in grenade attack

NAIROBI, 13 MAY

Rwanda has denied claims by neighboring Burundi that it armed a rebel group that was accused of carrying out a grenade attack, as relations between the two countries continue to be strained. "We call on Burundi to solve its own internal problems and not associate Rwanda with such despicable matters," government spokesperson Yolande Makolo said in a statement Sunday. Burundi's interior ministry blamed the grenade attack on Friday that injured 38 people on RED-Tabara rebels and said the group was backed by Rwanda. The rebel group denied responsibility for the attack. Relations between Rwanda and Burundi have deteriorated since early this year when Burundian President Evariste Ndayishimiye renewed accusations that Rwanda was funding and training the RED-Tabara rebels. *—AP*

Putin removes minister who led war campaign

Putin said Andrei Belousov will be the next defence minister

MOSCOW, 13 MAY

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday replaced Sergei Shoigu as defence minister in a Cabinet shakeup that comes as he begins his fifth term in office.

In line with Russian law, the entire Russian Cabinet resigned Tuesday following Putin's glittering inauguration in the Kremlin, and most members have been widely expected to keep their jobs, while Shoigu's fate had appeared uncertain.

Putin signed a decree on Sunday appointing Shoigu as secretary of Russia's Security Council, the Kremlin said. The appointment was announced shortly after Putin proposed Andrei Belousov to become the country's defence minister in place of Shoigu.

The announcement of Shoigu's new role came as 13 people were reported dead and 20 more wounded in Russia's border city of Belgorod, where a 10-story apartment building partially collapsed after what Russian officials said was Ukrainian shelling. Ukraine hasn't commented on the incident.

Shoigu's deputy, Timur Ivanov, was arrested last month on bribery charges and was ordered to remain in custody pending an official investigation. The arrest of Ivanov was widely interpreted as an attack on Shoigu and a possible precursor of his dismissal, despite his close personal ties with Putin. Belousov, 65, held leading positions in the finances and economic department of the prime minister's office and the Ministry of Economic Development. In 2013, he was appointed an adviser to Putin and seven years later, in January 2020, he became first deputy prime minister.

Tatiana Stanovaya, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center, said in an online commentary that Shoigu's new appointment to Russia's Security Council showed that the Russian leader viewed the institution as "a reservoir" for his "'former' key figures — people who he can't in any way let go, but doesn't have a place for."

Figures such as former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev have also been appointed to the security council. Medvedev has served as the body's deputy chairman since 2020. *—PTI*

Russian President Putin with Defence Minister Shoigu **PHOTO: AP**

Army is locked in 'fierce' border battles: Zelenskyy

KYIV, 13 MAY

Ukrainian troops are locked in intense battles with the advancing Russian army in two border areas, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, while the death toll from a Russian apartment building collapse blamed on Ukrainian shelling rose to 15. Zelenskyy said "fierce battles" are taking place near the border in eastern and northeastern Ukraine as outgunned and outnumbered Ukrainian soldiers try to push back a significant Russian ground offensive. "Defensive battles are ongoing," Zelenskyy said. The Kremlin's forces are aiming to exploit Ukrainian weaknesses before a big batch of new military aid for Kyiv from the US and European partners arrives on the battlefield in the coming weeks and months, analysts say. *—PTI*

Russian building collapses after shelling, 13 killed

MOSCOW, 13 MAY

An apartment building partially collapsed in the Russian border city of Belgorod on Sunday, causing at least 13 deaths and injuring 20 other people, officials said.

They blamed Ukrainian shelling for the building's destruction. Online footage showed rescuers searching for survivors among the remnants of the building's stairwell, then fleeing the scene as part of the roof crashed to the ground. Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry said 13 bodies had been recovered from the rubble so far. Russia's Investigative Committee, the country's top law enforcement agency, said in a statement that the 10-story building had been hit by Ukrainian shelling. The Russian Defence Ministry later wrote on social media that the building had been damaged by fragments of a downed Tochka-U TRC missile. It also said that air defences had shot down several more rockets over the Belgorod region, as well as two drones that were destroyed in a separate incident later Sunday.Air raid alerts continued across Belgorod as rescuers worked. The city also came under fire Saturday evening, killing one person and wounding 29 others, Belgorod Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said. Cities have come under regular attack from drones since May 2023, with Russian officials blaming Kyiv. *—AP*

Georgia: 'Russia-style' law sparks protests

TBILISI, 13 MAY

Georgia's parliament green-lit a final vote on a proposed law that critics see as a threat to media freedom and the country's aspirations to join the European Union on Monday, a day after police dispersed the latest protests against it.

The bill would require media and non-governmental organisations and other non-profits to register as "pursuing the interests of a foreign power" if they receive more than 20 per cent of their funding from abroad.

Opposition denounces the bill as "the Russian law" because Moscow uses similar legislation to crack down on independent news media, non-profits and activists critical of the Kremlin. The bill is nearly identical to one that the governing Georgian Dream party was pressured to withdraw last year after street protests.

Renewed demonstrations have rocked Georgia for weeks, with demonstrators scuffling with police, who used tear gas and water cannons to disperse the crowds.

The government says the bill is necessary to stem what it deems as harmful foreign influence over the country's politics and to prevent unspecified foreign actors from trying to destabilise it.

Huge crowds marched through Europe Square in the capital, Tbilisi, on Saturday, with demonstrators wrapped in Georgian and European Union flags and chanting "Georgia!"

Police sought to disperse the demonstration, and by Monday morning, only hundreds remained near parliament. Georgia's Interior Ministry said 20 people were arrested in the morning, including three foreign citizens — two Americans and a Russian. *—PTI*

Thousands of people took to the streets of Tbilisi to protest a bill that could force NGOs to register as foreign agents **PHOTO: EPA**

PoK: Situation tense as strike enters 4th day

ISLAMABAD, 13 MAY

The situation remained tense in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on Monday as the total strike against high prices of wheat flour and inflated electricity bills and taxes entered its fourth day, with the Pakistan government stepping up efforts to de-escalate the situation following deadly clashes between security forces and protesters.

The disputed region witnessed clashes on Saturday between the police and activists. One police official dead and injuring over 100 people, mostly policemen.

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is expected to convene a high-level meeting on Monday to discuss the ongoing situation as the negotiations between the protesters and the state government ended in a deadlock.

The Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), which has traders at the forefront in most parts of the region, has been seeking the provision of electricity as per hydropower generation cost in the region, subsidised wheat flour and an end to the privileges of the elite class.

A long march led by JAAC left for Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, on Monday as the wheel-jam strike entered its fourth day. The movement announced its march on Muzaffarabad after the talks between the JAAC core committee and Chief Secretary of the region Dawood Bareach ended in a stalemate. *—PTI*

The disputed region witnessed clashes on Saturday **PHOTO: X/@DAILYEXCELSIOR1**

Pak's Deputy PM Dar in Beijing; set to meet top Chinese leaders

BEIJING, 13 MAY

Pakistan's newly-appointed Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar on Monday reached here for a four-day official visit during which he will meet top Chinese leaders and co-chair a bilateral strategic dialogue between the two all-weather friends. Dar, who is also the foreign minister, was received by Director General Ambassador Wang Fu Kang, Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi, state-run AP. *—PTI*

ISRAEL-GAZA WAR

Blinken dials Israel minister, reaffirms Oppn to Rafah Op

Antony Blinken meets Israel Defence Minister Yoav Gallant **PHOTO: AP**

WASHINGTON, 13 MAY

US State Secretary Antony Blinken on Sunday reaffirmed America's opposition to Israeli plans of holding a major military operation in Rafah city of Gaza with Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant and underscored the urgent need to protect civilians amid war.

This comes as Blinken held a telephonic conversation with the Israeli Minister as Israel vowed to hold the Rafah operation at any cost. "Secretary of State Antony J Blinken spoke with Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant today. The Secretary affirmed the ironclad US commitment to Israel's security and the shared objective of the defeat of Hamas. They discussed the situation in Gaza and ongoing efforts to secure the release of hostages. The Secretary reaffirmed the US opposition to a major military ground operation in Rafah, where over one million people have taken shelter," US State Department spokesperson Mathew Miller said in a statement. "The Secretary underscored the urgent need to protect civilians and aid workers in Gaza and urged the Minister to ensure assistance can move into Gaza and help address distribution challenges inside of Gaza as Israel pursues Hamas targets," he said.*—ANI*

Israel plans agri waste treatment facility in areas

TEL AVIV, 13 MAY

Israel is set to add a new natural waste treatment facility in the south of the country, specifically in the areas near Gaza.

To that end, its Ministry of Environmental Protection, as part of its "Green South" initiative, together with the Western Negev Cluster invited entrepreneurs to submit applications for financial support for the establishment of a facility for the treatment of vegetable agricultural waste in the Takuma (Rebirth) region of towns and farms near the border of Gaza. The Takuma area was devastated in the Hamas 7 October terrorist massacre and this is just one of many plans for the rehabilitation of the region. The selected firm will receive a grant of up to 40 million Shekels, but no more than 40% of the investment cost. The Western Negev is the Osem of the State of Israel, and, huge amounts of agricultural waste produced there pile up without care. *—ANI*

SHEHBAZ SHARIF STEPS DOWN AS PREZ OF PML-N

ISLAMABAD, 13 MAY

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday resigned as the President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), ARY News reported, citing sources.

Shehbaz Sharif has submitted his resignation as party president to Nawaz Sharif, the PML-N supremo.

In light of the senior politician's resignation, the PML-N has decided to call a general council meeting in Lahore on 28 May to elect a new president.

PML-N had earlier announced to hold general council meeting on 11 May, reported ARY News.

In a recent presser, Rana Sanaullah stated that the Punjab chapter of the PML-N has asked Nawaz Sharif to take up the party presidency once more, stressing the importance of his leadership to the party's achievements.

He stated that a resolution asking Nawaz Sharif to lead the party once more through this trying time was passed during the PML-N Punjab meeting, according to ARY News.

It is important to note that, following his conviction in 2018, the former prime minister was barred from holding any public office. *—ANI*

Nepal President's economic advisor resigns

KATHMANDU, 13 MAY

The economic advisor to Nepal's President Ram Chandra Paudel has resigned after his controversial remarks on the government's decision to issue new hundred-rupee notes with a map that includes three Indian territories, a move already rejected by India.

The President approved Chiranjivi Nepal's resignation on Sunday, according to the press release issued by the Office of the President.

Ex-governor of the country's central bank, Chiranjivi had reportedly termed the government's decision to print the new map on the notes as 'an inappropriate move'.

A Cabinet meeting last week decided to replace the old map with the new one while printing new notes of Rs 100.

The new map includes territories such as Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiyadhura. India maintains Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura belong to it.

CPN-UML chairman and former Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli had publicly criticised Chiranjivi Nepal for his remarks. "I have raised this serious issue to draw the public attention as it might cause practical problems to the people," Chiranjivi Nepal mentioned in his resignation letter, an aide to the president told PTI on condition of anonymity.

"I have tendered my resignation from the post to maintain the dignity of the honourable President, as attempts were made to unnecessarily drag the president into controversy citing my statement," Chiranjivi Nepal pointed out. Earlier, a group of civil society leaders had demanded the removal of Chiranjivi Nepal over his remarks against the government's decision to print new hundred-rupee notes with the map of Nepal as per the amended Constitution. *—PTI*

TOLL REACHES TO 41

Indonesia flash floods: More bodies found

PADANG, 13 MAY

Rescuers recovered more bodies Monday after monsoon rains triggered flash floods on Indonesia's Sumatra Island, bringing down torrents of cold lava and mud, leaving 41 people dead and another 17 missing.

The heavy rains, along with a landslide of mud and cold lava from Mount Marapi, caused a river to breach its banks. The deluge tore through mountainside villages along four districts in West Sumatra province just before midnight Saturday. The floods swept away people and submerged nearly 200 houses and buildings, some severely damaged, said National Disaster Management Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari.

Cold lava, also known as lahar, is a mixture of volcanic material and pebbles that flow down a volcano's slopes in the rain. Rescuers on Monday recovered more bodies, mostly from villages that were worst hit in Agam and Tanah Datar districts, bringing the death toll to 41, said Ilham Wahab who heads the West Sumatra Disaster Mitigation Agency.

"Bad weather, damaged roads and access that blocked by thick mud and debris were hampering relief efforts," Wahab said.

He said at least 19 people were injured in the flash floods and rescuers are searching for 17 villagers reported missing.

Heavy rains cause frequent landslides and flash floods in Indonesia, an archipelago nation of more than 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near floodplains. *—AP*

Rescuers carry the body of a victim of a flash flood in Tanah Datar, West Sumatra, Indonesia, Monday **PHOTO: PTI**

- The heavy rains, along with a landslide of mud and cold lava from Mount Marapi, caused a river to breach its banks. The deluge tore through mountainside villages along four districts in West Sumatra province just before midnight Saturday. The floods swept away people and submerged nearly 200 houses

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Gold falls ₹100; silver slumps ₹300 amid global cues

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Gold prices fell Rs 100 to Rs 73,150 per 10 grams in the national capital amid a decline in precious metal rates in the international markets, according to HDFC Securities. The metal had closed at Rs 73,250 per 10 grams in the previous session. Silver prices were also slumped Rs 300 to Rs 85,200 per kg. In the previous close, it had settled at Rs 85,500 per kg. "Spot gold prices (in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 73,150 per 10 grams, down by Rs 100 against the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said. In global markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,347 per ounce, down USD 13 from the previous close. It resumed trading on a weaker note as traders trimmed positions.—*PTI*

Rupee falls 1 paisa to close at 83.52 against US dollar

MUMBAI, 13 MAY

The rupee consolidated in a narrow range and settled for the day lower by 1 paisa at 83.52 (provisional) against US dollar on Monday, as the support from positive domestic equities was negated by strong American currency. Forex traders said with foreign investors buying US dollars and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) selling the greenback, the USD/INR pair is expected to remain range-bound with a bit of a weakness bias. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit traded in a narrow range. It opened at 83.51, and touched an intraday low of 83.53 during the day. The domestic unit finally settled for the day at 83.52 (provisional), down 1 paisa from its previous close. On Friday, the rupee closed at 83.51 against the American currency.—*PTI*

Google to offer cloud solutions to Airtel customers

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Google Cloud and Bharti Airtel have collaborated to deliver cloud solutions to the latter's customers, according to a joint statement issued on Monday. The long-term partnership will offer cloud solutions from Google Cloud to fast-track cloud adoption and modernisation for Airtel's customers, the statement said. "The two companies will bring together their unique strengths of connectivity and AI technology to develop industry-leading AI/ML solutions that Airtel will train on its large data set," it said. The two entities will work together on a "joint go-to-market", combining Airtel's connectivity and distribution channels with Google Could's AI technologies. Airtel will provide cloud-managed services to its customers, which include both large enterprises and emerging businesses. These solutions will include geospatial analytics solutions with advanced location intelligence, voice analytics solutions, and marketing technology solutions .—*PTI*

Crude oil futures decline on low demand

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Crude oil futures on Monday marginally declined 0.02 per cent to Rs 6,550 per barrel as participants trimmed their positions on low demand. On the Multi Commodity Exchange, crude oil for May delivery marginally fell Re 1 or 0.02 per cent to Rs 6,550 per barrel with a business volume of 7,956 lots. Globally, West Texas Intermediate crude oil traded 0.18 per cent higher at USD 78.40 per barrel, while Brent crude was trading 0.12 per cent lower at USD 82.89 per barrel in New York.—*PTI*

Markets rebound, Sensex closes up 111pts

Nifty rose by 48.85 points or 0.22 per cent to 22,104.05

MUMBAI, 13 MAY

Benchmark Sensex and Nifty staged a dramatic rebound on Monday to settle higher following buying in HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Tata Consultancy Services.

Helped by buying at the fagend, the 30-share BSE Sensex closed higher by 111.66 points or 0.15 per cent at 72,776.13. The index opened lower and plummetted further 798.46 points or 1.09 per cent to hit a low of 71,866.01 in day trade.

The NSE Nifty rose by 48.85 points or 0.22 per cent to 22,104.05. The 50-issue rebounded around 310 points from the day's low of 21,821.05 and hit a high of 22,131.65.

From the Sensex basket, Asian Paints, Sun Pharma, HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Axis Bank, Tata Steel, JSW Steel, Larsen & Toubro, ICICI Bank and Power Grid were the major gainers.

Tata Motors dropped over 8 per cent despite reporting over three-fold jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 17,528.59 crore for the fourth quarter ended 31March, 2024.

NTPC, Bharti Airtel, Titan, State Bank of India and Nestle were the other major laggards.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said, "Though the market reversed from the day's low and ended up with a marginal gain, investors remain concerned over the progressing general election and high valuation."

The 30-share BSE Sensex closed higher by 111.66 points or 0.15 per cent at 72,776.13 PHOTO: PTI

An absence of major positive triggers and the flight of FIIs from the domestic market will keep the short-term trend weak, Nair added

An absence of major positive triggers and the flight of FIIs from the domestic market will keep the short-term trend weak, Nair added, said.

"VIX's rise from record lows to above 20 now, has unfolded in just a fortnight's time. So, while recent history points to more room for upside in VIX and thereby volatility, the abruptness in the rate of change of VIX, may lead to a cool off, perhaps even before the electoral results," Anand James, Chief Market Strategist, Geojit Financial Services said.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.36 per cent while smallcap index dipped 0.23 per cent.

Among the indices, services climbed 1.41 per cent while realty (1.32 per cent), healthcare (1.15 per cent), industrials (1.03 per cent), commodities (0.79 per cent) and bankex (0.65 per cent) also advanced.

Consumer Discretionary, telecommunication, utilities and auto were among the laggards.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai settled lower while Hong Kong ended in the positive territory.

European markets were trading mostly lower. Wall Street ended mostly higher on Friday. —*PTI*

SHARES TANK BY 8 PC

Shares of Tata Motors on Monday tanked more than 8 per cent after the company's March quarter PHOTO: PTI

Tata Motors' mcap down by ₹29,016 cr

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Shares of Tata Motors on Monday tanked more than 8 per cent after the company's March quarter earnings failed to cheer investors.

The stock plummeted 8.32 per cent to settle at Rs 959.80 apiece on the BSE. During the day, it plunged 9.44 per cent to Rs 948.

On the NSE, it tanked 8.33 per cent to Rs 959.40 per piece.

The company's market capitalisation (mcap) was wiped out by Rs 29,016.23 crore to Rs 3,19,012.47 crore.

It emerged as the biggest laggard among the BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty firms.

The 30-share BSE Sensex settled 111.66 points up at 72,776.13. The NSE Nifty climbed 48.85 points to 22,104.05.

Tata Motors on Friday reported an over three-fold jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 17,528.59 crore in the fourth quarter ended March 2024, riding with all its three auto businesses delivering a strong performance, especially the British arm Jaguar Land Rover.

The company had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 5,496.04 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal, Tata Motors said in a regulatory filing.

Total consolidated revenue from operations stood at Rs 1,19,986.31 crore compared to Rs 1,05,932.35 crore in the year-ago period.

In Q4 FY24, Tata Motors said all three auto businesses delivered strong performance.

—*PTI*

'LONG HAUL'

Emirates sees USD 4.7 billion profit in 2023 post pandemic

DUBAI, 13 MAY

The long-haul carrier Emirates announced Monday it saw record profits of USD 4.7 billion in 2023 as the airline fully took flight after the turbulent years of the coronavirus pandemic disrupted its operations.

Emirates, owned by Dubai's government, announced revenues of USD 33 billion, compared to USD 29.3 billion the year before. Profit the year prior had been USD 2.9 billion.

The airline carried 51.9 million passengers in its 2023 financial year, as compared to 43.6 million the year prior.

"Throughout the year, we saw high demand for air transport and travel related services around the world, and because we were able to move quickly to deliver what customers want, we achieved tremendous results," Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum, the chairman and CEO of Emirates said in a statement.

"We are reaping the benefit of years of non-stop investments in our products and services, in building strong partnerships, and in the capabilities of our talented people."

The Emirates' results track with those for its base, Dubai International Airport. The world's busiest airport for international travellers had 86.9 million passengers last year, surpassing numbers for 2019 just before the coronavirus pandemic grounded global aviation.

The airport had 89.1 million passengers in 2018 — its busiest-ever year before the pandemic. —*PTI*

The airline carried 51.9 million passengers in its 2023 financial year PHOTO: X/@emirates

'Risk profile weighs on banks' viability ratings'

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Fitch Ratings on Monday said Indian banks' risk appetite through higher loan growth will remain a key consideration for their creditworthiness despite improved financial performance.

It said asset quality pressures from the previous credit cycle are subsiding, creating a favourable business environment. This has bolstered banks' potential and appetite for growth.

Bank loans grew by 16 per cent in the financial year ended March 2024, similar to FY23, exceeding the 8 per cent CAGR (compound annual growth rate) over FY15-FY22.

Retail loans constitute around 10 per cent of system loans, and grew at a 20 per cent CAGR since FY21, fuelled by a shift towards unsecured credit to expand margins, the US-based rating firm said.

Large private banks gained significant market share in the last credit cycle and continue to grow rapidly; state banks also returned to brisk growth but lagged large private banks, Fitch said in a report titled 'Risk profile weighs on Indian banks' viability ratings despite improved performance'.

Bank loans grew by 16 per cent in the financial year ended March 2024, similar to FY23

Fitch said India's household debt is among the lowest in the world, despite rising to around 40 per cent of GDP from 38 per cent in FY23.

"Nonetheless, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has expressed concerns regarding the fall in the household savings rate, early delinquencies, higher loans per borrower (43 per cent of consumption loan borrowers had three live loans), and surge in consumption loans, even though secured loans dominate banks' loan books," Fitch said. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

VIERA TO INVEST ₹450 CR FOR NEW UNIT IN NOIDA

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Consumer electronics and appliances maker Veira on Monday said it will invest Rs 450 crore to set up a new manufacturing unit at Greater Noida to enhance capacity for air coolers and washing machines.

This investment will result in increasing existing production capacity from 1 lakh to 5 lakh units of washing machines and air coolers annually, Veira said in a statement.

"This expansion marks our commitment to serving both domestic and international markets," Veira Director Ankit Maini said, adding that the company anticipates these product segments to contribute 15 per cent to its revenue by the end of FY25.

The company, a contract manufacturer, said it already manufactures air coolers for 23 Indian and global brands. Similarly, it manufactures washing machines for 25 such brands.

At present, the company said it has two facilities at Noida's Sector 81 and 85, covering a combined area of 5 lakh square feet. —*PTI*

ISRO Chief unveils zero emission initiative

KOCHI, 13 MAY

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space, Government of India, S Somanath unveiled the carbon reduction initiative of SFO Technologies, the flagship company of the NeST Group on Saturday. Besides planting a sapling at the first private SEZ in India, NeST HiTek Park to mark the occasion, he also unveiled a replica of Chandrayaan at the campus highlighting the cooperation of SFO Technologies and ISRO.

The Carbon Reduction initiative of SFO Technologies and the NeST Group follows the United Nations' objective of achieving a 50 percent reduction by 2035 and zero emissions by 2040.After unveiling the Zero Emission initiative, Somanath spoke in detail about the developments in the Indian aerospace and space industry —*PTI*

Rulka sets price band at ₹223-235 per share

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Integrated electrical services company Rulka Electricals on Monday announced that its initial public offering will hit the markets on Thursday to raise over Rs 26 crore.

The Mumbai-headquartered company has fixed the price band for the issue at Rs 223-235 per share.

The initial public offering (IPO) of Rulka Electricals Ltd (REL) will open on 16 May and conclude on 21 May. The shares of the firm will be listed on the NSE's SME platform Emerge, the company said in a statement.

Retail sales across segments rose by 10 per cent to 2,45,30,334 units last fiscal PHOTO: PIXABAY

The IPO is a combination of a fresh issue of 8.42 lakh equity shares and an offer for sale of up to 2.8 lakh shares by selling shareholder Abhay Kantilal Shah HUF, with a face value of Rs 10 each through the book-building route. —*PTI*

Suzuki says will continue to expand SUV portfolio

NEW DELHI/TOKYO, 13 MAY

Japanese car maker Suzuki Motor Corporation on Monday said it will continue to expand SUV portfolio in India to recover its overall market share in the passenger vehicle segment.

The company, which currently has around 58 per cent stake in Maruti Suzuki India, said its net sales increased by 732.6 billion yen (15.8 per cent) year-on-year to 5,374.3 billion yen for the last financial year.

Operating profit increased by 115 billion yen (32.8 per cent) YoY to 465.6 billion yen.

"We will continue to promote the expansion of our SUV models (in India) and aim to recover our total passenger car share," Suzuki Motor Corporation said in a statement.

Currently, Maruti Suzuki sells SUV (sport utility vehicle) models like Brezza, Jimny and Grand Vitara in the domestic market.

The company's market share has come down to around 42 per cent from over 50 per cent a couple of years back in the domestic passenger vehicle segment on account of limited options in the SUV segment.

With the market demand rising for SUVs, the company is in the process of bolstering its presence in the segment and regaining its market share.

Suzuki Motor Corp said that in April 2024, a new production line with an annual capacity of 1 lakh units started operations at the Manesar plant.

The company said it plans to secure a production capacity of around 40 lakh units in India by FY2030.

Suzuki Motor Corp said it expects record sales and profits this fiscal due to higher unit sales. —*PTI*

OLA SHUNS MICROSOFT

India needs its own tech platforms: Ola CEO

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Rebuking Microsoft and its subsidiary LinkedIn, Ola CEO Bhavish Aggarwal in a post said India needs to establish its own tech platforms to shun the chances of being "culturally subsumed" and "governed" by western big tech monopolies.

Boycotting Microsoft, Aggarwal said Ola -- an existing customer of Microsoft Azure -- will no longer avail of its services, and will shift its entire workload to its homegrown Krutrim cloud in a week.

The backlash comes after LinkedIn removed the CEO's post that called out LinkedIn's AI for "imposing a political ideology on Indian users".

He had shared a screenshot from a generative AI response that used "they/their" pronouns to describe Aggarwal.

Berating the "pronoun illness", he had said he hopes the practise doesn't reach India.

"...the pronouns issue I wrote about is a woke political ideology of entitlement which doesn't belong in India. I wouldn't have waded into this debate but clearly LinkedIn has presumed Indians need to have pronouns in our life, and that we can't criticise it. They will bully us into agreeing with them or cancel us out," he wrote later.

Aggarwal called out to the Indian developer community to build a DPI (digital public infrastructure) social media framework.

OLA CEO Bhavish Aggarwal said India needs to stop being 'culturally subsumed' and 'governed' by western monopolies PHOTO: X

Lauding Indian DPIs like UPI, ONDC, and Aadhaar, he said the only community guidelines should be the Indian law.

"No corporate person should be able to decide what will be banned. Data should be owned by the creators instead of being owned by the corporates who make money using our data and then lecture us on 'community guidelines'," he said.

Aggarwal further wrote, "Since LinkedIn is owned by Microsoft and Ola is a big customer of Azure, we've decided to move our entire workload out of Azure to our own Krutrim cloud within the next week."'I'm not against global tech companies. But as an Indian citizen, I feel concerned that my life will be governed by western Big Tech monopolies and we will be culturally subsumed as the above experience shows," he said. —*PTI*

LSG face DC in playoff battle

Focus will be on skipper KL Rahul as he may step down as captain

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Focus will be on skipper KL Rahul as a struggling Lucknow Super Giants look to keep their slim IPL playoff chances alive when they face an equally desperate Delhi Capitals in a must-win game here on Tuesday.

There has been a lot of speculations about Rahul's future as LSG skipper after his "public reprimand" by team owner Sanjiv Goenka following their 10-wicket hammering by Sunrisers Hyderabad last Wednesday.

Speculations are rife that Rahul may step down as captain or perhaps he will do his duties for the remaining two games before leaving LSG. In either case, the India batter would look to answer with his bat and end things on a high.

Rahul hasn't been in the best of form and it's not only cost him a place in India's T20 squad but also left LSG at the seventh spot with 12 points with RCB and DC, who are fifth and sixth respectively. Five days is a lot of time to introspect and Rahul and Co. will look to come out all guns blazing when they face DC, who are also on 12 points and are coming into the match after a loss against RCB on Sunday night.

Besides Rahul, Quinton De Kock's poor form this season has left LSG struggling in the powerplay, putting pressure on the likes of Marcus Stoinis and Nicholas Pooran, who haven't got the freedom to unleash their big shots. Although Pooran and Ayush Badoni managed to rescue the team in the last match, the bowlers failed miserably against the formidable SRH pair of Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma, who racked up 167 in 9.4 overs, a T20I record by any team.

Delhi Capitals, on the other hand, will hope the return of skipper Rishabh Pant after a one-match suspension due to slow overrate against Rajasthan Royals will help them to end things on a high. Delhi sans Pant paid the price for their fielding lapses as those drop catches and misfields came back to haunt them against RCB on Sunday night.

While the bowlers let RCB off the hook after a good start, the batting once again came unstuck as they lost four wickets inside 4 overs to be bowled out for their lowest innings score this IPL. But this is the same team which scored four 200 plus totals this season and they will have to find their mark in their last game to salvage any slim hopes of a top four. *—PTI*

Punjab Kings (PBKS) players during the practice session ahead of the match between Punjab Kings and Rajasthan Royals at ACA stadium, Barsapara in Guwahati on vMonday **PHOTO: PTI**

TODAY'S MATCH

DELHI CAPITALS

PUNJAB KINGS

Time: 7.30 pm
Where To Watch: Jio Cinema, Star Sports Network

Stadium:
Arun Jaitley, vDelhi

Netherlands announces T20 WC squad

AMSTERDAM, 13 MAY

Netherlands announced their squad for the upcoming ICC T20 World Cup 2024 in West Indies and USA on Monday and a couple of experienced performers, all-rounder Roelof van der Merwe and key batter Colin Ackermann missed out while young left-arm spinner Tim Pringle, seamer Kyle Klein and hard-hitting opener Michael Levitt were included in the squad. Levitt turned heads with a blistering hundred against Namibia in a T20I tri-series played in Nepal back in February, hitting 11 fours and 10 sixes in a knock of 135 from just 62 balls, as per ICC. Wicket-keeper-batter Scott Edwards will once again lead the Netherlands in his regular role as skipper, with star all-rounder Bas de Leede among the key players for a Dutch side. *—ANI*

Norris pictured lifting trophy during F1 race win

MIAMI, 13 MAY

McLaren driver Lando Norris won his first ever race in Formula 1, on his 110th attempt, beating reigning world champion Max Verstappen. Despite his track record, he says he knew "by lap 30" he was going to claim first place. "I finally got my first win," he says. Lando's celebrations saw him party with Super Bowl winner Travis Kelce, and he says he hopes to one day go to a Kansas City Chiefs game. Lando, from Somerset, was the first person to beat Max Verstappen this season in a race that the Red Bull driver finished. Carlos Sainz won the Australian Grand Prix in March, with Verstappen retiring in the early stages of that race. Lando told Radio 1 he's been driving for as long as he can remember. *—BBC News*

Annu Rani finishes 6th in Hylo Javelin Meet

OFFENBURG, 13 MAY

Indian javelin thrower Annu Rani started her season with a 60.68m mark and finished sixth at the Hylo Javelin Meeting 2024 in Offenburg, Germany on Sunday. In her first meeting since winning the Asian Games title last year, Annu Rani started slowly but registered her best throw of the day on her final attempt at the ETSV Stadion. Reigning U20 world champion Adriana Vilagos of Serbia won the gold medal with a distance of 63.58m. African Games champion Jo-Ane Van Dyk of South Africa clinched the silver with 63.57m while Maria Andrejczyk of Poland, a Tokyo 2020 Olympics silver medallist, settled for bronze with 62.72m. Annu Rani qualified for Tokyo 2020 through the world rankings route after missing the Olympic qualification mark. *—ANI*

RCB SHOULD BRING KOHLI BACK AS CAPTAIN: HARBHAJAN

NEW DELHI, 13 MAY

Royal Challengers Bengaluru should think about giving back the team's captaincy to Virat Kohli, who has an ideal combination of intent, commitment and aggression to take the side forward from the next season, reckons former India off-spinner Harbhajan Singh.

Kohli is the leading run-scorer in the ongoing IPL with 661 runs from 13 innings at a strike rate of 155.16. Placed fifth in table with 12 points, RCB are still alive in the playoff race.

"If they don't qualify, they should look to get some Indian guy. Why not bring Virat Kohli back as captain. As Dhoni has a lot of impact in Chennai, Virat Kohli is a big leader, he knows the kind of cricket they need to play," Harbhajan said in the latest episode of the Star Sports' Press Room. *—PTI*

Chess: Praggu, Humpy, to lead

STAVANGER, 13 MAY

Grandmasters R Praggnanandhaa, Koneru Humpy and Vaishali Rameshbabu will spearhead India's challenge in the prestigious

Norway Chess, to be held here from 27 May to 7 June.

Popularly known as the 'Wimbledon of Chess', this tournament annually extends invitations to top grandmasters from the world rating list.

Praggnanandhaa's outing will be keenly watched after the world No. 11 player finished a creditable fourth in the recent Superbet rapid and blitz tournament.

He is the only Indian men's player in the 12th edition of the event which will feature World No.1 Magnus Carlsen, who won the Superbet, World No.3 Hikaru Nakamura and current World Champion Ding Liren.

Praggnanandhaa was also the winner of the Norway Chess International Open Tournament in 2022.

He remained unbeaten throughout the nine rounds, recording 7.5 points to clinch the title.

India's world No. 2 Humpy and No. 14 Vaishali, sister of Praggnanandhaa, will feature in a strong women's field that has world champion Ju Wenjun of China and her compatriot Lei Tingjie.

However, within the top 100 players globally, no women are listed. Hence, to set a new benchmark for gender equality, Norway Chess has introduced world's first-ever equal female tournament this year. *—PTI*

SHYAAMNIKHIL BECOMES INDIA'S 85TH G MASTER

DUBAI, 13 MAY

P Shayaamnikhil became India's 85th Grandmaster by completing his third and final GM norm in the just-concluded Dubai Police Masters chess tournament, ending a 12-year-wait for the player who took to the sport as an eight-year-old.

Shyaamnikhil needed just one win and eight draws to complete the long-overdue GM title which he achieved in the tournament.

The 31-year-old conjured the requisite 2500 ELO rating points, the minimum requirement to be a GM, way back in 2012 with two Grandmaster norms but for the third one, he had to wait for 12 years.

Hailing from Nagarcoil in Tamil Nadu this was not an easy ride for the player, who was known as one of the finest talents of his time. *—PTI*

> Today under high stress, it was quite bad — not in terms of pain, but in terms of this balance. Just no coordination. Completely different player from two nights ago ... I don't know. I have to do medical checkups and see what's going on
>
> -Novak Djokovic, Tennis Player

Djokovic follows Nadal to early exit at Italian Open

ROME, 13 MAY

Novak Djokovic's performance was so poor that even the 24-time Grand Slam champion admitted it was "concerning."

Djokovic put on one of his worst displays at one of his favorite tournaments as he was upset by 29th-seeded Alejandro Tabilo in the third round of the Italian Open. It was Djokovic's first match since accidentally getting knocked on the head by a water bottle while signing autographs after his opening win on Friday.

"I managed to sleep okay. I had headaches. The next day or yesterday was pretty fine, so I thought it's okay. Maybe it is okay. Maybe it's not," Djokovic said. "I mean, the way I felt on the court today was just completely like a different player entered into my shoes. Just no rhythm, no tempo, no balance whatsoever on any shot. It's a bit concerning."

Djokovic started off with a double-fault and it didn't get much better for the six-time Rome champion. The top-ranked Djokovic lost his first two service games and went on to lose the match 6-2, 6-3 in just 68 minutes, handing Tabilo the victory when he double-faulted – his fifth of the match – amid boos at the Foro Italico. *—AP*

Environmental protests stop two matches

ROME, 13 MAY

Two matches at the Italian Open in Rome were suspended following a protest by climate activists. The last-16 tie between Madison Keys and Sorana Cirstea was interrupted. *—BBC*

Thailand Open: Satwik-Chirag last hope for India

BANGKOK, 13 MAY

Star shuttlers Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty will look to regain their competitive edge as they spearhead the Indian challenge at the Thailand Open Super 500 tournament, beginning here on Tuesday.

The top seeded Indian pair, who are one of the favourites to win a gold at the Paris Olympics, found it a tad difficult to negotiate the variety of serves dished out by the Indonesians and Chinese at the Thomas Cup. Both shuttlers will look to address the slight drop in their level this week when they begin their campaign against Malaysia's Nur Mohd Azriyn Ayub Azriyn and Tan Wee Kiong.

With the Olympic-bound shuttlers looking to fine-tune their skills ahead of the Paris Games, the BWF world tour events will offer the perfect platform for them to test those new strokes or tweaks that they make to their games.

India's top player in singles, HS Prannoy, a world championships and Asian Games bronze medallist, too will have to find his best footing after being troubled by health issues this season. His win over Indonesia's Anthony Ginting was a confidence booster but the loss against China's Shi Yuqi will trouble him.

Kiran George and Sathish Kumar Karunakaran are also in fray, while Lakshya Sen and PV Sindhu had pulled out before the draw was announced last week. *—PTI*

Fed Cup: India has a successful start

BHUBANESWAR, 13 MAY

Star Indian javelin throwers Neeraj Chopra and Kishore Jena have been given direct entry into the Federation Cup finals on 15 May, having already bettered the minimum qualification mark of 75m multiple times in their careers.

Santosh Kumar secured the gold medal in men's 400 m hurdles on the opening day of National Federation Senior Athletics Competition 2024 at Bhubaneswar's Kalinga Stadium on Sunday.

Nikhil Bhardwaj secured the silver medal with the timings of 50.92s and the bronze was bagged by Dhaval Mahesh Utekar, who clocked 51.13s.

Javelin thrower Rashmi K also achieved her personal best on the opening day of the competition, with 54.75 m in the final of the women's javelin throw, outdoing her previous best of 53.95 m. DP Manu, who finished sixth in the 2023 World Championships and who is looking to qualify for the upcoming Paris Olympics by breaching the 85.50m mark, will also compete directly in the finals.

In the women's 400 m hurdles, Veerpal Kaur bagged the gold medal by clocking the timings of 59.43s. With timings of 1:00.73 seconds, Salini Kris had to settle for a silver and Ramandeep Kaur achieved a bronze medal by securing timings of 1:01.29 seconds. Sheena NV of Kerala got the silver medal in women's triple jump with a distance of 13.32m while Gayathry Sivakumar bagged the bronze medal after recording 13.08m. *—PTI/ANI*

CRISIS IN FOOTBALL

PHOTO: X/ @TenHagBall

'So bad' - is this Man Utd team really 'one of the worst ever'?

MANCHESTER CITY, 13 MAY

As Manchester United chased an equaliser against Arsenal on Sunday, the bright blue sky above Old Trafford rapidly gave way to thunderstorms and heavy rain.

Those conditions could easily act as a metaphor for the Red Devils' season, where hopes of battling with the Gunners and Manchester City at the top of the table have turned to frustration at another campaign of disappointment.

In years gone by, games between Manchester United and Arsenal were meetings between two sides battling at the top of the table but this time the role of Erik ten Hag's side was to be the spoiler in their rival's title race, a task they ultimately fell short in.

In the end, Leandro Trossard's first-half goal proved decisive as Arsenal left Old Trafford with three points that moved them top of the table and ensured they take the fight with Manchester City for the Premier League title down to the final day.

They have also lost nine games at Old Trafford this term - their joint-most at home in a season - and have conceded 82 goals in all competitions, which is their most since 1970-71.

Despite the issues United have had this season, they do have the FA Cup final to look forward to.

But their opponents in that game are Manchester City and Ten Hag knows his side will need to show significantly more fight if they are to finish a disappointing season on a high. *—BBC News*

PHOTO: X/@PSG_English

Mbappé's relationship with PSG ending on a sour note after starting amid fanfare

PARIS, 13 MAY

Kylian Mbappé's relationship with Paris Saint-Germain started with great fanfare but is ending amid ongoing tensions and without a Champions League trophy.

Mbappé joined as a teenage phenom from Monaco in 2017 in a deal worth 180 million euros ($194 million). On Sunday, the 25-year-old superstar played his last home game for PSG and scored in a 3-1 loss to Toulouse.

The late-evening announcement by Mbappé may have taken PSG by surprise since it was in a video posted on X, and not through the club's communication department.

Between then and the Sunday night kickoff, there were more than 20 posts on PSG's official feed on X.

Those included an exclusive look at next season's home strip, an item on a betting site, a clip of PSG's women's team reaching the French Cup final, and kickoff times for the match in different parts of the world — but nothing on Mbappé.

No tribute was paid to him by the club during Sunday's game, either, albeit not the last match of the season.

It was left to the ultra-supporters from the CUP, or Paris Ultras Collective, to honor him with a banner and a giant tifo in his image.

The fracture between the cash-rich Qatari-owned club and its 256-goal record scorer appears to run deep. *—AP*